

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES FACULTY HANDBOOK

Among the faculty, staff, and students at Montana State University Billings are many people with disabilities. This handbook is designed to help faculty become more comfortable and effective when working with students with disabilities. Questions relating to reasonable accommodations for MSU Billings' faculty and staff should be addressed to Human Resources, (406) 657-2278. Questions relating to students with disabilities should be addressed to Disability Support Services, (406) 657-2283 (voice/text/VP) or (406) 247-3029 (voice/text/VP).

Disability Support Services' (DSS) goal is to ensure that students with disabilities have equal physical and academic access to the campus. Appropriate accommodations do not affect the academic integrity of a class. Students are encouraged to be self-advocates who identify their own needs, take personal initiative in problem solving and decision making, and effectively use available services to fully participate in the educational experience.

Students registered with DSS are expected to conform to MSU Billings' policy regarding student rights and responsibilities as noted in the Student Handbook.

Faculty should refer students who request accommodations for a disability to Disability Support Services.

Legal Issues

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 are civil rights legislation which prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

According to these laws, no otherwise qualified individuals with a disability shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.

"Qualified" with respect to postsecondary educational services, means "a person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices; the removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers; or the provision of auxiliary aids and services".

"Person with a disability" means "any person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working), 2) has a record of such an impairment, or 3) is regarded as having such an impairment".

Disabilities covered by legislation include (but are not limited to) AIDS, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, head injuries, hearing impairments, specific learning disabilities, loss of limbs, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, psychological disorders, speech impairments, spinal cord injuries, and visual impairments.

Confidentiality

Disability-related information is deemed medical information under Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and is considered confidential. Students who request services, provide documentation, and qualify

for services are issued an identification card, (or a letter, if they prefer), which lists their accommodations.

Academic Accommodations

Legislation does not seek to change the fundamental methods of ensuring a sound education and successful completion of an academic program. Rather, it is designed to ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to access academic programs. People with disabilities must meet the same admission criteria as do people without disabilities. Upon admission, students with disabilities are entitled, under both Section 504 and the ADA, to reasonable accommodations and placement in the most integrated setting feasible and the participation in all campus activities to the extent appropriate. DSS will work with students and faculty to arrange appropriate accommodations.

Common academic accommodations include but are not limited to textbooks in alternative formats, notetakers, tape recorded classes, extended-time exams, scribes, sign language interpreters, computers for essay tests, and readers.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS are DSS volunteers, workstudy students, and part-time employees who help to provide access to classroom information.

LAB ASSISTANTS perform the physical manipulation required for laboratory procedures, under the direction of the student with a disability.

NOTETAKERS are classmates willing to share their notes with students with a disability.

READERS read text and describe visuals for students with various disabilities.

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS physically assist students with disabilities who are gathering research materials. DSS appreciates your cooperation with us to arrange for these assistants.

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS are skilled professionals and follow the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Code of Ethics. The interpreters do not participate in class discussion, and do not advise deaf or hard of hearing students. In addition, they are not responsible for a student's behavior, comments, study habits, or academic progress.

Interpreters will sit or stand, facing the class and as close to the instructor as possible. Faculty should be aware that interpreters are usually a sentence behind the spoken word. This can cause a delay in the student's response. Interpreters will vocalize the words of the deaf or hard of hearing student in the first person, e.g. "I'm ready to give my presentation." The interpreters will also sign all comments heard during class.

The interpreters have structured schedules. They are not assigned exclusively to one student. Faculty should be aware that interpreters may not be able to stay beyond the scheduled class time. Students may request an interpreter for private meetings with faculty, or for other course-related activities.

Some students use real-time captioning technology to access class lectures. This can be live, in which the captioner is in the classroom with the student, or remote, in which the captioner listens to the lecture via internet connection. For remote captioning, the student will set up a microphone and will need access to the classroom's internet connection.

The interpreters present a training session each semester and invite instructors who have deaf and/or hard-of-hearing students in their classes. One-on-one training can also be arranged and a variety of printed information is available. The DSS interpreters can be contacted at 657-2159.

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT

DSS, in conjunction with Information Technology and the Library, provides computer programs, equipment, and training to students with disabilities. This includes text-to-voice and voice-to-text software, Braille imprinters, enlargers, electronic whiteboard, and assistive listening devices.

SUGGESTIONS FOR AN ACCESSIBLE CLASSROOM

Provide a detailed course syllabus. Make it available in the department or on the Web prior to the registration deadline. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requires educational institutions to inform students with disabilities of the services available to them, and OCR "strongly suggests" that class announcements and syllabus statements are the most effective method.

Course instructors are encouraged to provide appropriate individual flexibility to all students. However, when disability-related accommodations are requested, instructors should refer students to Disability Support Services and consult with DSS staff to identify strategies or accommodations which provide access and maintain academic rigor. If an accommodation is determined to be appropriate, faculty may coordinate it directly or ask DSS for assistance.

The following statement is approved for use on syllabi:

For East Campus classes:

Students with Disabilities:

MSU Billings is committed to providing equal access. If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please contact Disability Support Services (657-2283; located in the Academic Support Center). We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. If you need assistance during an emergency evacuation, please let me know.

For COT classes:

Students with Disabilities:

MSU Billings is committed to providing equal access. If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please contact Disability Support Services (247-3029; located in the Tech Building, room A008). We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. If you need assistance during an emergency evacuation, please let me know.

Including this syllabus statement preserves students' privacy and also indicates your willingness to provide accommodations.

Define expectations early. Students with disabilities often need time to arrange for support services through DSS. For instance, a student who is blind must have several weeks' notice to be able to obtain text in alternative format.

Use a variety of teaching methods. Some examples are:

- Face the class when speaking
- Put your lecture outline online (or pass out a hard copy).
- Legibly write key phrases on the blackboard.
- Present vocabulary aloud and in written form.
- Use visual aids to reinforce the lecture.
- Describe aloud any visual aids used during class.
- Illustrate abstract concepts with concrete examples.
- Give opportunities for hands-on learning where possible.
- Allow students to use current technology, such as hand-held spelling devices or word processors for tests and assignments. Faculty should be aware that penalties for misspelled but correct responses might put some students at a disadvantage due to their disability.
- Use closed captioning when showing videos in class.

Course Substitution

It is the policy of Montana State University Billings to provide course substitutions when warranted. The decision to grant a course substitution is decided on a case-by-case basis. Students must submit documentation of a disability which substantially limits a major life activity to Disability Support Services. Students must work with their advisors to determine if a substitution is warranted and what the substitution will be. The substitution must be approved by the requesting student's advisor, the department head and dean of the College from which the course substitution is requested.

Evacuation

If you are a person (employee or student) with a disability who may need assistance during a crisis, it is strongly recommended that you locate the rescue assistance areas in all buildings. Work with Disability Support Services to develop an individual plan for how you will handle various types of emergency situations. If you need assistance and do not have a plan, it will be more difficult to assure your safety. Signs in buildings with stairwells indicate designated rescue assistance locations. Fire code requires that people evacuate buildings when the fire alarm sounds.

In any emergency situation, if an individual wants to help a person with a disability, always ASK how you can help BEFORE giving assistance. Ask how he or she can best be assisted or moved, and whether there are any special considerations or items that need to come with the person.

DO NOT use elevators, unless authorized to do so by police or fire personnel. Never use elevators if there is fire or structural damage to the building.

People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Most areas and rooms in University buildings are equipped with fire alarms. Deaf or hard-of-hearing people may not notice or hear emergency alarms and may need to be alerted to emergency situations.

People with a Sight Disability

People with sight disabilities are generally familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes. Nonetheless, because the emergency evacuation route might be different from commonly traveled routes, people who have a sight disability should be assisted to exit the building.

People who are Mobility Impaired (those who do not use a wheelchair)

People with mobility impairments who are able to walk independently may be able to negotiate stairs in an emergency with minor assistance. In an actual evacuation, these individuals may choose to wait until heavy traffic has cleared before attempting the stairs. If there is no imminent danger, the person with a disability may choose to stay in the building or move to an Area of Refuge until emergency personnel arrive. Elevators can be used only if authorized by emergency personnel, but may never be used in the event of fire or structural damage.

People who are Mobility Impaired (those who use a wheelchair)

In an emergency situation, people who are unable to use the stairways to exit a building will wait at the nearest designated rescue assistance* locations, if it is safe to do so, until someone comes to help them evacuate the building. Emergency personnel are trained to go to Areas of Refuge to assist people with disabilities. If the person with a disability is alone, he/she should contact University Police at 657-2147 or call 911. He/she should give the present location or Area of Refuge to which he/she is going. Elevators can be used only if authorized by emergency personnel, but may never be used in the event of fire or structural damage. It takes special training and practice to evacuate someone in a wheelchair; moving people in wheelchairs down a stairwell is not recommended. It is suggested that one individual remain with the person who is disabled, if this can be done without unreasonable personal risk, while another person notifies rescue personnel.

Source: <http://www.gallaudet.edu/>

Location of Rescue Assistance areas:

Apsaruke Hall East and West stairwell landings
Cisel Hall North stairwell landings
McDonald Hall Stairwell landings near the elevators
College of Education Center stairwell landings
College of Technology Tech building Second floor near room B012
College of Technology Health Sciences building stair wells on the north and south ends
Liberal Arts Building South stairwell landings
Library East stairwell landings
McMullen Center stairwell landings
Petro Hall Center stairwell landings
Rimrock Hall Center stairwell landings
Science Building West stairwell landing

*Rescue Assistance areas refers to a designated location where a person may wait for rescue personnel. The wording is not meant to imply compliance with the ADAAG requirements required for new multi-story construction.

Use common sense and your best judgment in an emergency situation; if a safe rescue assistance area is not available, try to choose a protected room with a phone. Note the room number and notify rescue

personnel immediately of the location of the person who needs to be rescued. While it is best to follow the individual's emergency plan, in the event of an imminent life-threatening situation, **no one should hesitate to assist a person with a disability to evacuate a building, using whatever means possible.**

TYPES OF DISABILITIES -- Visible and Invisible

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

"Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Both children and adults with autism typically show difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities." Autism Society Of America (ASA)

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders may have difficulty with social communication including difficulty expressing emotions and thoughts and difficulty interpreting other people's body language and vocal expressions.

Sample Accommodations:

When students have the intellectual ability to access curricular content, but cannot do so because of issues related to ASD, accommodations may be available to enable full access. These are some of the possible accommodations that might be available:

- For students with issues related to executive function, large assignments can be broken down into smaller, more manageable tasks and turned in separately (VanBergeijk, Klin, & Volkmar, 2008).
- Students who struggle socially may be excused from group work and complete assignments independently.
- Preferential seating in the classroom may help filter distractions.
- If a student takes longer than most to process information, extended time on tests and assignments may be helpful.
- Students who have a hard time writing legibly may be allowed the use of a computer, word processor, or scribe.

Read more about Autism Spectrum Disorders in Postsecondary Education:

<http://collegewithasd.com/page9/page12/page12.html>

<http://www.researchautism.org/resources/AspergerDVDSeries.asp>

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/x711353873813ung/>

DEAF/HARD OF HEARING

The age of onset of hearing loss will have a great impact upon the student's English ability, both spoken and written. Generally, English is considered a second language for people who are deaf. Students who use interpreters will need to watch the interpreter and instructor at the same time. People who are deaf or hard of hearing communicate in a variety of ways. Some communicate by speaking and using their residual hearing, often augmented by hearing aids; some use only sign language; and others will use a combination. Speech reading (lip reading) is an acquired skill that some deaf and hard of hearing people use to varying degrees. It is not a skill that is innately endowed upon deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Only about 30% of spoken speech is visible on the lips.

- ▶ [Click here to learn more about working with students who are deaf/hard-of-hearing](#)
- ▶ [Click here to learn more about having a Sign Language Interpreter in your classroom](#)

HEAD INJURY

A person with a head injury may experience difficulty with concentration, memory, problem solving, and abstract reasoning. The most commonly reported problem is poor memory. Faculty may find that such students perform better on exam items that involve recognition (multiple choice, matching) than on exam items requiring recall (fill in the blank, essay).

Accommodations depend on the type of injury and how it affects the brain.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Students with learning disabilities are the largest population of students who are registered with DSS. Learning disabilities affect the manner in which individuals acquire, integrate, and/or express knowledge. Learning disabilities (LD) may affect a student's performance in reading, writing, spoken language, mathematics, or orientation to space and time. Students with LD report they learn best when instructors write down key terms during lecture, give opportunities for hands-on activities, and use all modalities when teaching.

Sample Accommodations:

- Notetakers and/or audio taped class sessions
- Visual, aural, and tactile demonstrations incorporated into instruction
- Computer with voice output, spellchecker, and grammar checker
- Alternative testing

MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT

Physical access is one of the major concerns for students with a mobility impairment. Students may encounter unavoidable delays when, for example, a vehicle blocks a ramp. When a course requires travel to other locations, those locations must be accessible. In order to participate fully in classroom activities, students may need to use Educational Assistants.

Sample Accommodations:

- Alternative testing
- Lab assistants
- Classrooms, labs, and field trips in accessible locations
- Adjustable tables; lab equipment located within easy reach
- Class assignments and notes made available in electronic format
- Notetakers
- Assistive technology

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITIES

Psychological disabilities include depression, bipolar disorder (or manic depressive disorder), anxiety disorders including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and schizophrenia, among others. On rare occasions, classroom behavior can become an issue. Students with disabilities who violate the student

conduct code are subject to discipline according to that code. Faculty may want to discuss privately with the student what is and is not appropriate. DSS staff is available to consult on these issues.

Some students undergoing treatment take prescription medication to help control symptoms. This medication may have side effects such as drowsiness or disorientation.

Sample Accommodations:

- Alternative testing
- Time extensions
- Note takers

SEIZURE DISORDERS

Students with a seizure disorder may be affected at any time with little or no warning. Some medications can lessen or control seizures, but produce side effects such as slowed response and impaired coordination.

If you see someone having a seizure with convulsions and/or loss of consciousness, here's how you can help:

1. Roll the person on his or her side to prevent choking on any fluids or vomit.
2. Cushion the person's head.
3. Loosen any tight clothing around the neck.
4. Keep the person's airway open. If necessary, grip the person's jaw gently and tilt his or her head back.
5. Do NOT restrict the person from moving unless he or she is in danger.
6. Do NOT put anything into the person's mouth, not even medicine or liquid. These can cause choking or damage to the person's jaw, tongue, or teeth. Contrary to widespread belief, people cannot swallow their tongues during a seizure or any other time.
7. Remove any sharp or solid objects that the person might hit during the seizure.
8. Note how long the seizure lasts and what symptoms occurred so you can tell a doctor or emergency personnel if necessary.
9. Stay with the person until the seizure ends.

Call 911 if:

- The person is pregnant or has diabetes.
- The seizure happened in water.
- The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes.
- The person does not begin breathing again and return to consciousness after the seizure stops.
- Another seizure starts before the person regains consciousness.
- The person injures himself or herself during the seizure.
- This is a first seizure or you think it might be. If in doubt, check to see if the person has a medical identification card or jewelry stating that they have epilepsy or a seizure disorder.

After the seizure ends, the person will probably be groggy and tired. He or she also may have a headache and be confused or embarrassed. Be patient with the person and try to help him or her find a

place to rest if he or she is tired or doesn't feel well. If necessary, offer to call a taxi, a friend, or a relative to help the person get home safely.

If you see someone having a non-convulsive seizure, remember that the person's behavior is not intentional. The person may wander aimlessly or make alarming or unusual gestures. You can help by following these guidelines:

1. Remove any dangerous objects from the area around the person or in his or her path.
2. Don't try to stop the person from wandering unless he or she is in danger.
3. Don't shake the person or shout.
4. Stay with the person until he or she is completely alert.

Source: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

SPEECH IMPAIRMENT

There are several kinds of speech impairments, including stuttering, articulation problems, and voice disorders. The ability to enunciate is not a measure of intelligence. Most speech-impaired students have a means of communication that is effective for them. Faculty should encourage these students to use their preferred mode of communication.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

"Legally blind" indicates that a student has less than 20/200 vision in the better eye or a very limited field of vision (20 degrees at the widest point).

Students with visual impairments may experience eyestrain, sensitivity to light, an inability to read printed material or to distinguish certain colors.

Students who have been blind from birth (or shortly after) have no visual memories. Their concepts of objects, space, and distance may be different from those people who became visually impaired later in life. Mobility and orientation skills also vary due to numerous factors.

Coordination of support services for a visually impaired student is often complicated. Advance notice of assignments and requirements is imperative for the student's success. DSS can put written materials into alternative format for students, including enlarged font, audio files and/or Braille. Some students use a variety of formats, depending upon the material that needs to be accessed

If needed, identify yourself at the beginning of a conversation and notify the student when you are exiting the room. When giving instructions, be clear. For instance, say the chair is to your left.

Sample Accommodations:

- Large print handouts, lab signs, and equipment labels
- Texts in alternative format
- TV monitor connected to microscope to enlarge images
- Enlarged fonts on computer
- Taped class lectures (consent forms are available upon request)
- Raised-line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials

- Braille access for information if requested
- Computer with text to voice program

OTHER DISABILITIES

There are a number of other disabilities and medical conditions that may interfere with a student's academic work, concentration, and attendance. Questions about disabilities may be directed to DSS.

EXAM ACCOMMODATIONS

Academic adjustments are defined in the Section 504 regulations at 34 C.F.R. § 104.44(a) (2006) as: [S]uch modifications to the academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of [disability] against a qualified ... applicant or student [with a disability]. Academic requirements that the recipient can demonstrate are essential to the instruction being pursued by such student or to any directly related licensing requirement will not be regarded as discriminatory within the meaning of this section. Modifications may include changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree requirements, substitution of specific courses required for the completion of degree requirements, and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted.

Academic adjustments also may include a reduced course load, extended time on tests and the provision of auxiliary aids and services.

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transitionguide.html>

Exam accommodations may be necessary to properly evaluate a student with a disability. Examples of accommodations may include a distraction-reduced environment, extended time, a reader or scribe, and/or the use of a computer or adaptive equipment. The DSS Director approves all disability-related accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to meet with faculty to discuss the necessary accommodations well in advance of exams. See the Guidelines for Exam Accommodations appended to this handbook.

GUIDELINES FOR EXAM ACCOMMODATIONS

Alternative testing is an appropriate academic accommodation provided by Disability Support Services to ensure equal opportunity for students with disabilities. Not all students with disabilities receive testing accommodations. However, students with disabilities who are documented through the DSS office will be issued an identification card (or letter, if they prefer) which states the accommodations to which they are entitled, including alternative testing.

Faculty may choose to arrange testing accommodations within their facilities, or they may work with DSS. Our goal is to ensure that the test results reflect the students' knowledge of the material rather than their disability.

When a test is to be arranged through Disability Support Services, these are the procedures:

1. Student

- Meets with instructor to discuss exam arrangement and explain the nature of the disability.
- Contacts DSS to request time/space/assistance for an exam.

2. Instructor

- Meets with student to discuss exam arrangements.
- Let DSS know if there are any special instructions.

Examples of special instructions may include:

- Calculator allowed
- Notes allowed
- Open book
- Dictionary allowed

3. DSS

- Contacts instructor to request exam (DSS tries to notify instructor several days before the exam.)
- Administers exam at the same time the class takes the exam. (Exceptions must be approved by the instructor.)
- Closely proctors all exams.
- Seals completed exams and returns to designated person (instructor or administrative assistant).
- Exams will be signed in and locked in a secure file except during actual testing time or when being returned.

Disability Support Services invites instructors to share any concerns regarding the alternative testing procedures or concerns regarding students with the Director of Disability Support Services [Academic Support Center, Room 10, 657-2283 (V/TTY)].

THE STAFF OF DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) OBSERVES THE FOLLOWING COMMON PROCEDURES TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS RECEIVE APPROPRIATE TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students should schedule all exams at least one week in advance. Standbys may be accepted based on schedule availability.

The test will be given on the day and at the time scheduled. The amount of time authorized to complete the exam will be decreased by the amount of time the student is late.

Rescheduled exams are permissible with the consent of the instructor and availability of DSS staff. All exams are returned to the instructor/department by the end of the day regardless of completion.

It is the students' responsibility to notify the instructor and DSS if they are not able to test at their scheduled time.

DSS staff are not authorized to modify instructions given by the instructor.

Students are to remain in the assigned room once testing begins unless supervised breaks have been authorized. Staff may accompany the student during a break.

Students need to leave all possessions (i.e. book bags, instructional materials, coats, etc.) outside the testing area. Students may request secured areas for valuables. Students found with unauthorized instructional materials will be referred to the instructor.

Exam Accommodations for Online Classes

The Online testing request form must be completed by the student at the beginning of the semester and emailed to the professor, the Online Coordinator and the Director of Disability Support Services. The Director will confirm the student's accommodations with an email to the Professor and the Online Coordinator.