Making Education Accessible
Office of Student Accessibility | Pepperdine University

Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodations vary depending upon the student, disability, and requirements of the class.

Examples include:

- Use of a word processor for class notes
- Testing accommodations: extended time, distraction-reduced testing room, enlarged print, reader, scribe, and/or text to speech software
- Recording of lectures and class discussions
- Note taker
- Alternate Text
- Interpreter or assistive listening device
- Service animal
- Captioning of videos

Questions

Office of Student Accessibility (OSA)

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For more information visit:
http://www.pepperdine.edu/student-accessibility/

Working with Students with Disabilities

When Students Self-Disclose

Students are encouraged to register with OSA at the beginning of their Pepperdine experience or when the disability is diagnosed. They may register at any point during a semester. When registered, students receive an accommodation letter that will confirm the student's association with our office. This letter will verify necessary accommodations for you. It is up to the student to determine when he or she will use accommodations; it is not uncommon for a student to use accommodations for some classes and not others, on some exams and not others.

Best Practices

- Engage with the student, finding out how he or she best learns.
- Use multiple modalities to deliver content, knowing not everyone learns in the same way.
- Post notes and PowerPoints to allow students to review material multiple times. Some people need to hear or read material more than once.
- Use high contrast on PowerPoints.
- Use captioned videos, even YouTube clips.
- Employ universal design principles as you prepare your classes.

When Students Do Not Disclose

DO engage the student in a private conversation if you suspect a student has a learning disability or needs support.

DO NOT directly ask student if there is a disability.

DO engage students in actively reflecting on their learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses in a manner such as the following:

- "It seems like _____ is challenging for you…"
- "Has _____ always been difficult for you?"
- "Do you know what helps you learn most efficiently?"
- "How can we work together to help you get the most out of my class?"

DO NOT grant requests for accommodations by students for whom you have not received the proper notification from the Office of Student Accessibility.

DO refer students to Pepperdine's Office of Student Accessibility to begin a dialogue on learning needs and appropriate support.

DO continue to observe, monitor and engage students in conversations about their learning processes, strengths and weaknesses.

Some Disabilities You May Encounter

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities (LDs) are defined as neurological conditions that interfere with a person's ability to store, process, or produce information (Learning Disabilities Association of America, 2013). Learning disabilities can affect reading, writing, speaking, spelling, math computation, reasoning, attention, memory, coordination, social skills and emotional maturity. Learning disabilities frequently occur in individuals of average to superior intelligence. Learning disabilities are not a result, emotional disorders, cultural differences, or lack of educational opportunities.

Types of Learning Disabilities

INPUT:

- **Auditory Processing Disorder**: difficulty recognizing subtle differences between sounds in words
- **Auditory Sequencing Deficit**: inability to hear sounds in the correct order
- **Auditory Figure-Ground Deficit**: inability to distinguish one sound among others
- **Central Auditory Processing Deficit**: difficulty processing and remembering oral language-related tasks
- **Dyslexia**: language disorder interfering with the spoken or written word
- **Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit**: frequent letter reversal, difficulty copying accurately, frequent eye pain or itch, often loses place while reading, and/or struggles with fine motor tasks such as cutting, drawing, etc.

OUTPUT:

- **Language Disorders (Aphasia/Dysphasia)**: trouble understanding spoken language; poor reading comprehension; trouble with expressive language abilities
- **Dysphasia**: disorder affecting word retrieval or fluency when speaking or understanding
- **Dysgraphia**: writing disorder affecting production of the written word graphically or syntactically

INTEGRATION (Executive Function):

- Working memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory affected.
- **Dyscalculia**: disorder affecting mathematical concepts or computation
- **Organization**: An individual might have difficulty organizing materials and assignments.
- **Non-Verbal Learning Disorders**: trouble with nonverbal cues, e.g., body language; poor coordination, visual-spatial-fine and/or gross motor integration.

Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) symptoms are characterized by "inattention and hyperactivity and impulsivity that include behaviors like failure to pay close attention to details, difficulty organizing tasks and activities, excessive talking, fidgeting, or an inability to remain seated in appropriate situations." (DSM-5, 2013) It is characterized by an inability to concentrate and/or attend, and can present with or without hyperactivity. In an academic setting, students with ADHD may experience difficulty:

- Comprehending/conceptualizing the main idea of a lecture or reading assignment.
- May be hampered and frustrated by their inability to screen out distractions while studying or taking exams, which may subsequently affect their reading rate and/or writing ability
- May experience side effects of the medication. As with any other type of disability, there is a wide qualitative and quantitative range.

A student diagnosed with ADHD may experience difficulty with any of the following:
**Concentrating · Sustained focus · Time management
Listening for meaning · Sequencing · Initiating · Organizing
Task completion · Following directions · Sequential processing
Cognitive flexibility · Transitioning · Impulsivity
Maintaining boundaries · Consistency · Self-reflection
Task analysis · Simultaneous processing · Memorization**

Mental Health Disabilities

Psychological disorders are patterns of psychological symptoms or behaviors that:

- Impact multiple life areas and/or create distress for the person experiencing symptoms
- Frequently require medication, cognitive and/or therapeutic intervention.
- Fall into the group of **non-apparent disabilities**, which may or may not affect learning, and may often not be recognizable in the classroom.
- May include, but are not limited to depression, anxiety, OCD, Bipolar, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Phobias, Psychotic Disorders and Personality Disorders (DSM-V)

Autism Spectrum Disorders

(ASD), also known as Pervasive Development Disorders (PDDs), cause impairment in cognition, emotion, language and the ability to relate to others. These disorders are usually first diagnosed in early childhood. Students with ASD exhibit in one or more of the following:

- Impairment in social interaction/spontaneous sharing, including use of nonverbal behavior, lack of social/emotional reciprocity, failure to develop peer relationships, and/or inability to recognize personal/emotional boundaries
- Impairment in communication, including delay in or lack of development of spoken languages, impairment in the ability to initiate or maintain conversation, repetitive and idiosyncratic use of language.
- Repetitive behaviors and fixated interests, preoccupation with restricted patterns of interest, inflexible adherence to routines.

Procedure for Common Academic Accommodations

Note Takers

Faculty Responsibilities

- **The Office of Student Accessibility** assumes the responsibility for finding note takers in specific courses. If we are unable to locate a note taker, faculty are asked to do the following:

  o **Encourage students to volunteer**: make a general class announcement about the need.
  o **Maintain confidentiality** regarding student(s) in need; do not publicly use the name(s) of the student(s) in need while making this request to your class.
  o **If a note taker is not available**, it may be helpful to provide the student with a copy of lecture/class notes as an alternate means of meeting this accommodation. Student may also need to record the class if noes are not available.
  o **Instructors are encouraged to post notes and power points online.** This universal accessibility will be appreciated by all students, not just those associated with the OSA.

Student Responsibilities

- Students will not use an in-class note taker as a substitute for class attendance or participation.
- Note takers are required to apply with the OSA. Only those students who are hired as note takers are eligible for payment.
- If a note taker misses a class, they are responsible to get the notes from another student to give to the OSA for the student receiving notes.

Exam Proctoring

- The Office of Student Accessibility is available to assist professors who are unable to accommodate students' exam needs. Proctors will contact professors for exam information.

- An exam should be taken at the same time that the class is taking the exam. Once an exam has been completed, it will be returned to the instructor by the OSA or proctoring staff in a secure and timely manner.

- Exceptions to timing may only occur with professor's approval of the change.

Flexible Attendance

Some students with a chronic illness or psychological disability may need to miss more class than permitted by the class syllabus. The absences are due to the episodic nature of the condition, medical care, or transitions with medications. The OSA will engage with professors and students to discuss expected class outcomes and what flexible attendance should look like the individual student.

Assistive Technology

Individuals with disabilities use Assistive Technology (AT) to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. Assistive Technology can include mobility devices as well as hardware, or software.

Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards: https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it

Examples of assistive technology provided or approved by Pepperdine may include:

- Assistive Listening Devices
- NaturalReader
- Livescribe smart pens
- Dragon Naturally Speaking

Captioning

The captioning service provided by OSA for any videos or films to be shown on campus. The video should be sent to Jennifer Baker (jennifer.baker@pepperdine.edu, 310-506-6090) at least **10 days** in advance of showing.

Defining Disability

A person with a disability includes any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, hearing, seeing, walking, etc.). "Substantially" means that an individual's ability in a particular major life activity is significantly worse than that of the average person in the general population. The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** and **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act** protect the civil rights of individuals who are qualified to participate and have disabilities such as, but not limited to:

- **Physical:** Apparent physical disabilities, injuries, carpal tunnel syndrome, blind/low vision, deaf/hard of hearing and chronic medical conditions.

- **Cognitive:** Learning Disabilities are disorders that affect the ability to either interpret visual and auditory information, or to link information from different parts of the brain. These limitations can show up in many ways, as specific difficulties with spoken and written language, coordination, self-control, or attention. Such difficulties can impede learning, reading, writing, and/or math performance. ADHD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) are also in this category.

- **Emotional/Social:** Depressive Disorders, Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Eating Disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Schizophrenia, Tourette's Syndrome, Posttraumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD), Phobias.

An **accommodation** is the modification, adjustment, or elimination of a barrier to a program or service to enable an individual with a disability to participate on an equal basis. This is done to allow the student to show mastery of the material, while honoring the course objectives and intended educational outcome of the course.

Confidentiality

- The Office of Student Accessibility is committed to ensuring all student information, including psycho-educational and psychological evaluations and medical reports, are, as required by law, kept confidential.

- OSA does not disclose the details of a diagnosis of any student registered. Students, though, may choose to self-disclose to professors at their own discretion.

- Instructors are asked to respect the identity of students with disabilities, and not to reveal to other students or colleagues without the student's consent.

The entire class should NEVER be informed that there is a student with a disability enrolled, except at the request of the individual student. Any information provided to you is to be used solely and specifically for arranging reasonable academic accommodations for the course.

Accessible Class Space

Creating an inclusive, supportive, structured learning environment is essential for effective learning. Most classrooms at Pepperdine contain designated, accessible seating located near the main entrance to each room. Between aisles and in and around the accessible seating, there needs to be:

- An unobstructed walkway throughout room
- Whiteboard/TV/Projector visibility

In some studios, provisions may need to be made to the classroom space for students with physical disabilities. The Office of Student Accessibility will work with instructors and students to secure accessible workspaces.

Emergency Procedures

Instructors are responsible for aiding the emergency evacuation of students with physical disabilities who may require assistance.

- Explain basic emergency procedures to all students at the beginning of each semester, including the evacuation plan, and campus assembly points.
- On the first day of class, faculty members are encouraged to meet with students with physical disabilities to discuss their needs in the event of an emergency situation
- If the faculty member is otherwise unable to assist the student with a disability, the faculty member should ask for a student volunteer.

Temporary Disabilities

- Students with temporary disabilities resulting from injuries, surgery, or short-term medical conditions are also recognized under the ADA, and may need access to services and resources similar to individuals with permanent disabilities.

- Examples of temporary disabilities may include broken limbs, hand injuries, concussions, and other short term impairments following surgery or medical treatments.

- The same procedures apply as permanent disabilities.