

Methodist College Disability Services Faculty / Staff Handbook

Index

Mission Statement	1
Federal Laws	2
Confidentiality	2
Syllabus Statement	2
Reasonable Accommodations	3
Enhancing Learning of Students with Disabilities	4
Proctored Exams	5
Institutional / Disability Services Rights and Responsibilities	6
Faculty Rights and Responsibilities	6
Student Rights and Responsibilities	8
Appendix A Disability Services Student Manual	

Mission Statement

In keeping with the mission statement, Methodist College is committed to giving students with disabilities equal access to an education firmly grounded in the liberal arts tradition; to nurture moral values and ethical decision making; to prepare students for a variety of careers; and to provide educational and cultural services and resources to the community.

The staff at the Center for Personal Development takes seriously our role in helping **all** students attain academic success at Methodist College. Our goal is to help students with disabilities by: acting as advocates in the college community; encouraging independence and responsibility through student self-advocacy; acting as a liaison between students and the college community; and by securing reasonable accommodations and / or modifications for classes for students with the proper documentation.

Federal Laws Pertaining to students with Disabilities in Higher Education

There are two acts pertaining to students with disabilities in higher education – Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. These Acts guarantee that students with documented disabilities have rights (and responsibilities) to equal access and reasonable accommodations in the workplace and the classroom. It is important to remember that institutions of higher education have a legal obligation to provide equal access to programs and course information and failure to provide such may result in a legal action by the student. Therefore, it is imperative that the college maintain standardized policies and procedures for students with disabilities.

Confidentiality

Students with disabilities are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act as well as other civil rights laws. At no time should the faculty make any statements or implications that the student is any different from the general student population.

Please refrain from:

Asking the student to come to the classroom and then leave with the test in hand (see test proctoring procedures).

Placing the student in the hall or any other obvious place to take an exam.

Asking the student for documentation other than the letter from Disability Services.

Discussing the student's needs or accommodations other than in a private place or with individuals who do not have a need to know.

Making comparisons between students and their needs.

Using a grading standard that is any different from the rest of the class.

Giving students with disabilities an advantage over the rest of the class; the idea of the law is to give equal access or equal opportunity provided through the recommended accommodations.

Syllabus Statement

Each course syllabus should contain a Reasonable Accommodation Statement. Please include the following sample statement or a similar one in each course syllabus.

Any student eligible for and requesting academic accommodations due to a disability is requested to provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Services within the first two weeks of the beginning of classes. Disability Services is located in The Center for Personal Development in Pearce Hall. The Director of Disability Services can be reached at 630-7402.

Reasonable Accommodations

Access to Academics

All students with properly documented disabilities **must** be provided with equal access to academic opportunities such as programs of study, courses and academic services. Equal access refers to the student's ability to have access to the same level of success as students who do not have disabilities. Therefore accommodations, modifications, and adaptations must be made for the student to obtain the same benefits from a course or program of study.

Students are responsible for: initiating a meeting with the Director of Disability Services; providing appropriate documentation for their disabilities; and authorizing forms/letters to be sent to their instructors at the beginning of **each** semester that the service is required. Together the Director and the student will decide on the appropriate measures to be taken in order to provide equal access to the students' courses.

If the Director authorizes accommodations while documentation is pending, the student **must** provide the missing information by the culmination of **that** semester. If the requisite documentation is still missing at the beginning of the **next** semester, services will **not** be provided. Accommodations will be resumed upon presentation of complete documentation.

Accommodations must **not** fundamentally alter a course or program of study. If a clear case can be argued (by the faculty member or Department head) that a modification will fundamentally alter the course, the modification will **not** be provided. The faculty member, Department head and the Associate Academic Dean with the secondary participation of the Director of Disability Services will determine this. In such a situation, all efforts will be made to provide alternative accommodations to the student.

Examples of unreasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- Unlimited tutoring
- Waivers of courses that are essential to the program (or core requirements)
- Ungraded exams or exams on a pass/fail basis
- Excusing tardiness or lack of preparation
- Lowering passing scores
- Modification of class ranking
- Permission to re-take exams or courses at no cost

Examples of reasonable and common accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- Alternate testing location
- Extended time on tests or exams
- Information broken down into sequential form
- Tape recorders to tape lectures (With signed agreement protecting class content)
- Note takers

Limited individual tutoring
Course waiver or substitution when not essential to the program of study
Taped texts
Computer access
Calculator in class or exams (providing it does not fundamentally alter the class or exam)
Lowering the course load allowed
Reassignment of courses to accessible location if necessary
1st floor room in residence hall if needed
Structural alterations such as ramps or grab bars if needed
Alternate test formats
Alternate access to oral and/or written material
Instructions orally and in writing
Priority seating

Enhancing Learning of Students with Disabilities

Syllabi

Prepare early
Include complete textbook list
Include additional readings and their locations
State course goals and objectives
Specify exam and assignment dates
Detail assignments and papers for easy reference
Detail grading and evaluation methods
List course policies
Provide as much information about each lecture topic as possible
Adhere to the syllabus as much as possible; revise and provide a new copy if necessary

Lectures

Link previous lecture to current lecture
Outline main points on overhead
State class objective
Write key terms on overhead
Leave overheads up longer than you think necessary to copy
Identify patterns of organization
Make lectures interactive
Link concrete with abstract
Link sequential to random
Facilitate use of tape recording
Make notes available on the internet
Maintain student attention by varying delivery approach
Move around the room
Summarize or draw conclusions at the end of the lecture

The Academic Development Center and Disability Services have resources that may be checked out by students. Once the equipment has left the building, the student becomes responsible for its safety. Checking out equipment requires the student signing a form stating that they understand that they are responsible for the equipment, and if it is lost, stolen or damaged, their Methodist College account will be charged for the replacement amount. Students will not be allowed to use the Center's services until the amount is paid in full. Students must understand that transcripts will not be issued by the Registrar's office if there is an unpaid balance in the student's account.

Methodist College offers the following resources:

Tape recorders and cassette tapes

Texts on tape

4-track tape recorders

Reader(s) for test taking purposes only

Scribe(s)/Typist(s) for test taking and/or papers (by dictation only)

Alternate testing location

Photocopying course material

Tutoring services in all subjects except English

Study Skills texts, audio and videotapes

Computer access (Microsoft Word, Excel and internet access)

In order to receive modifications in a timely manner, students must meet with the Director of Disability Services prior to the onset of the semester (or not later than the 1st week of classes).

Proctored Exams

Providing a non-distracting environment for taking exams accommodates students with select disabilities. Research shows that extended time is also beneficial for most disabled students, and the standard is 1.5x the time allowed for students in the general population. The Center for Personal Development has a resource center available for this purpose. The Methodist College honor code is strictly enforced.

Students are to schedule their exams one-week in advance and are expected to take exams at the time that coordinates with the classroom exam. Faculty may choose to penalize an exam grade if it is determined the student scheduled the test at a different time from the class without faculty permission.

We have had great success allowing students to pickup their own exams under the following procedure:

- Instructor will place the exam in a sealed envelope along with any instructions, and place the instructor's signature across the seal. (Be sure to mention if it is open book!)
- Student will pick up the exam in the instructor's office just before class is scheduled to begin.
- The exam is delivered to a disability office staff member, the seal is broken, and the student is permitted to complete the exam.

- Students are not permitted to have personal belongings with them while taking the exam and a staff member is present at all times. (Never a student worker!)
- When the exam is complete the disability services staff member will seal the exam in an envelope, place our stamp across the seal, sign the seal, and return the envelope to the student to deliver to his or her instructor.

Example of stamp:

Alternate procedures are as follows:

- Fax the exam to the Disability Services office the day before the exam. (630-7263)
- Call 7402 one day in advance to request a student worker to pick up and return the exam.
- Place the exam in the Disability Services mail box located in the Student Development Office in Bern Student Center before 1:00 p.m. the day before the exam is to be proctored.

Should none of these suggestions meet your needs, please call the Director of Disability Services at 7402 to discuss other alternatives.

Institutional/Disability Services Responsibilities Summarized

- * To prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities.
- * To reduce or eliminate physical, academic and attitudinal barriers.
- * To provide reasonable accommodations.
- * To maintain the strictest of student confidentiality.
- * To develop a shared responsibility and community for individuals with disabilities.
- * To assist the student in self-advocacy.
- * To assist the student in problem solving.
- * To guide the student to possible resources that might assist him or her, whether it is on campus or networking in the community.
- * To be sensitive to the individual personalities of students, whether it be in communicating their needs or an attempt to maintain dignity with a very difficult issue.
- * To serve as liaison with faculty when a medical emergency necessitates an extended absence.

FACULTY RIGHTS/RESPONSIBILITIES SUMMARIZED

Several judicial decisions have stated that faculty members may be held personally responsible for compliance under federal statutes and regulations. In *Howe v. Hull*, 873 F.Supp. 72,77 (N.D. Ohio 1994) (Heyward, Lawton & Associates, 1995) the decision held "an individual may be subject to personal liability under the ADA." The court further outlined the circumstances as

being "where (a) he or she is in a position of authority; (b) he or she has both the power and discretion to perform potentially discriminatory acts; and (c) the discriminatory acts are the result of the exercise of the individual's own discretion, as opposed to the implementation of institutional policy or the mandates of superiors."

One of the roles of the Disability Services office is to support faculty by not only collaborating to provide academic adjustments but to advise the faculty of their obligations and their rights.

Rights

Taped Lectures

It is the faculty member's right to request a written agreement before allowing the student to tape record the class. Forms will be signed at the time of accommodation determination and a copy will be forwarded to the instructor.

Classroom Behavior

All students must adhere to the Methodist College code of conduct regardless of whether they have a disability. Infractions of this code should be directed to the Dean of Student Development and Services. If the student has been identified as a student with a disability, this information should be provided to the dean to facilitate collaboration with the coordinator of Disability Services.

Alternative Testing

A Testing Center for Disability Services is provided by Student Support Services in Pearce Hall. Replicated research has been undertaken to determine the necessity of extended test-taking time for individuals with disabilities. When the documentation does not specify the extent of the extended time necessary, the generalities from this research are used.

Challenge Accommodations

A faculty member has the right to challenge an accommodation request if s/he believes the student is not qualified, the accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the program, the institution is being asked to address a personal need, or the accommodation would impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Accommodation requests are based on documentation on file in the Disability Services Office. (If warranted, interim services are provided while documentation is being obtained). Due to confidentiality, the nature of the disability may not be disclosed to the faculty unless there is a specific need to know. When beneficial to the faculty/student academic relationship, students are encouraged to self-disclose.

Responsibilities

Shared responsibility

As an employee of Methodist College who has compliance obligations under federal laws, it is the responsibility of the faculty to assume a shared responsibility in providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

Whether or not faculty disagree with the law is immaterial. The college is responsible for implementation and, as an employee, faculty are required to adhere to the policies and procedures. The responsibility for meeting the academic needs of individuals with disabilities through reasonable accommodations has been assigned to the coordinator of Disability Services.

Referral

If a student notifies a faculty member that she or he has a disability or if the student brings a medical statement to the instructor, it is the faculty member's responsibility to refer that student with his or her medical statement to Disability Services. Also, if an instructor notices that a student is not performing up to standards and suspects there might be a learning disability, he or she should also refer the student.

Disability Certification Request

Faculty are not to provide academic adjustments under the guise of a disability unless there is a letter from Disability Services certifying the student is qualified to receive services and the nature of the accommodations. Faculty are encouraged to make additional recommendations for adjustments if they believe the student will benefit.

STUDENT RIGHTS/RESPONSIBILITIES SUMMARIZED

Rights

- * To not be denied access due to a disability.
- * To receive reasonable accommodations that provide equal opportunity.
- * To have access to auxiliary aids/assistive technology.
- * To not be counseled toward "more restrictive career objectives."
- * To receive assistance from the Disability Service office in removing any physical, academic and attitudinal barriers.
- * To not be discriminated against due to a disability or receive any retaliatory discrimination.

Responsibilities

- * To identify themselves to the Disability Services office.
- * To provide documentation of disability.
- * To initiate requests for accommodation by providing a certification of disability letter to faculty within the first two weeks of the semester.
- * To provide a minimum of a two-week notice for all major accommodation requests (special accommodations of equipment may need more time).
- * To provide one-week notice to the instructor and Disability Services office when they will be testing in the testing center.
- * To assume responsibility for testing procedures and notifying faculty and Disability Services accordingly.
- * To provide for his/her personal independent living needs or other personal disability-related needs.
- * To assume personal responsibility for meeting with faculty, requesting assistance through supplemental services such as the Excel Centers and meeting university standards.