



Faculty Guide to Student Accessibility Services

Created by Megan Riedl, December 2022

Updated: June 2025

Contents

Faculty Guide to Student Accessibility Services	1
Why Accessibility?	3
Beyond the Law	3
Basics and Introduction to Student Accessibility Services	5
What is a disability?	5
What is “accommodation” and what makes it “reasonable”?.....	5
Referring a Student to SAS.....	5
Campus Resources	6
Overview of Faculty Roles and Responsibilities	7
Syllabus Statement	7
Confidentiality.....	7
Rights and Responsibilities	7
Approved Accommodations	9
Providing Accommodations.....	10
Using Symplicity Accommodate	10
Testing Accommodations in Accommodate	11
Additional Reminders	12
Accessibility for All	14
What is Universal Design for Learning?	14
Frequently asked questions and scenarios	16
Special Thanks.....	17

Welcome!

This handbook is designed as a guide for the policies and procedures of Student Accessibility Services as well as a tool to help SUNY Canton faculty understand and utilize the principles of accessibility in their work. Disability is an essential component of diversity and SUNY Canton strives to create a learning environment that supports our diverse population.

Why Accessibility?

The Americans with Disability Act (1990; ADA) was modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin – and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 -- the ADA is an "equal opportunity" law for people with disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that:

"No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of...disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participating in, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794 (d)) requires federal agencies to ensure that information is made accessible to people with disabilities. In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities.

In addition to federal protections under the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act, individuals with disabilities in New York are further protected under the New York State Human Rights Law (NYS HRL). Codified in Executive Law Article 15, the NYS HRL prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, housing, public accommodations, education, and access to certain credit and services.

Under the NYS HRL, a disability is defined broadly to include both physical and mental impairments that may not necessarily limit a major life activity, expanding protections beyond those provided by federal law. The law requires employers, landlords, and providers of public services to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship.

Beyond the Law

As an institution, we should aspire to do better than just meet compliance standards. We strive to educate everyone, regardless of their disability status. Using the principles of Universal Design for Learning, we can make our web sites and instructional material accessible for everybody.

The three principles of UDL are:

1. Provide multiple means of engagement
2. Provide multiple means of representation
3. Provide multiple means of action and expression

Start with accessibility in mind! It's much harder to "retrofit" something that's already been done.

Please refer to this guide as you make decisions regarding the delivery of instructional materials, homework assignments, and assessments such as exams. Creating accessible courses means that every student will have the opportunity to learn!

Sincerely,

Megan Riedl, Director of Student Accessibility Services

Basics and Introduction to Student Accessibility Services

What is a disability?

A disability is: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual; a record of such an impairment; being regarded as having such an impairment.

Major life activities include, but are not limited to: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, working, the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

What is “accommodation” and what makes it “reasonable”?

Accommodation is a modification of typical processes, procedures, or rules. It is also known as an academic adjustment. The purpose of accommodations and academic adjustments is to provide equal access to students with disabilities. In higher education, these modifications are usually made to mitigate the impact of a student’s disability on their ability to access content and demonstrate their learning of the content.

Accommodation is meant to provide equal access to education. Anything that would fundamentally alter an academic requirement is unreasonable. Reasonable accommodation does not change learning objectives, performance requirements, course expectations, or educational goals. Furthermore, anything that would impose an undue financial burden or administrative burden would not be considered reasonable, as well as anything that would pose a direct threat to health or safety.

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) meets with every student who discloses a disability. Students need to submit disability documentation to support their access/accommodation plan. After engaging in the interactive process, the Director of Student Accessibility Services collaborates with the student to create an appropriate access/accommodation plan. The Director will discuss certain accommodation requests with the faculty, Program Chair, or Dean to determine if the request is reasonable. Faculty are encouraged to reach out to SAS if they have questions or concerns regarding an approved accommodation. If any changes are to be made, SAS will collaborate with the faculty in an interactive process. It is **never** appropriate for faculty to change or modify a student’s accommodation.

Referring a Student to SAS

There may be students who you believe may benefit from academic accommodation. While SAS wants all students with disabilities to receive necessary accommodation, it is the responsibility of the student to initiate the process with SAS. Please remember that disclosing a disability is a choice and not a requirement. However, if you choose to approach a student to discuss a possible need for services, please be aware that the student may be reluctant to talk about their disability. Privacy and sensitivity are essential. Feel free to call SAS to consult on the best possible approach.

If a student has asked for disability-related accommodation, referring them to SAS is appropriate and necessary. Faculty should always refrain from providing their own disability-related accommodation. When instructors provide their own accommodations, they are disregarding institutional policies that outline how accommodations are evaluated and communicated and ultimately put themselves and the institution at risk.

It is not appropriate to directly ask if a student has a disability. However, a referral to SAS or other campus supports may be appropriate if a student mentions the following:

- They have received a new diagnosis/they need medical absences
- They have received accommodations in high school/other college
- They have difficulty with reading or comprehending coursework
- They have difficulty managing the demand of the coursework
- They have trouble paying attention in class or taking notes
- They are the last to finish exams, do not complete them, or are performing badly compared to overall knowledge of the material
- They are seeing a therapist but still have trouble academically

Please remember that there are many factors that may affect a student's performance. Not all struggles indicate disability. Be familiar with other campus resources to offer students a range of support to ensure that you are not discriminating based on a perceived disability.

Campus Resources

[Davis Health Center](#)

Campus Center 004

Phone: 315-386-7333

Fax: 315-386-7932

healthcenter@canton.edu

Regular Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

[Counseling Center](#)

Campus Center 225

Phone: 315-386-7314

Fax: 315-386-7004

millerm@canton.edu

Regular Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

[Betty J. Evans Tutoring Center](#)

Learning Commons

Phone: 315-386-7228

tutoring@canton.edu

[Advising & First Year Programs](#)

Miller Campus Center 224

Phone: 315-379-3954

Fax: 315-386-7980

advising@canton.edu

Regular Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:00am - 4:30pm

Overview of Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

The role of faculty is to educate our students. This includes complying with the ADA and ensuring that all student accommodation is granted. It is the responsibility of the faculty to check that their materials are accessible from the beginning of the semester. Creating and maintaining an inclusive environment is essential for a positive educational environment for all our students.

Syllabus Statement

Every syllabus should contain a statement on equity and inclusion. Please copy and paste the below statement to add to the approved syllabus:

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION: SUNY Canton makes reasonable academic adjustments for qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a learning disability, a chronic illness, physical or mental health disability that may have some impact on your work for this class and for which you may need accommodations, please notify Student Accessibility Services in Miller Campus Center 235, by email at sas@canton.edu, or by telephone at 315-386-7392.

Confidentiality

It is essential that all disability information be kept confidential to comply with federal law and avoid creating uncomfortable situations for students with disabilities. All disability-related information is protected by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) including:

- Disability-related records and documentation, including the notification of accommodations email
- A student's affiliation with Student Accessibility Services
- A student's disability status
- A student's accommodations

All the information that faculty receive from a student or SAS regarding their disability is to be used for arranging appropriate academic accommodations only. At no time should the class be informed that the student has a disability, unless by student request or personal self-disclosure. Please be mindful of any unintentional announcements or actions that could single out a disabled student in class and violate FERPA.

Rights and Responsibilities

Student's Right and Responsibilities

- Access to programs, activities, services, advantages, and benefits
- No outcome expectations
- No benefit expectations
- Reasonable accommodation
- No unlawful discrimination
- Must be otherwise qualified to enroll as a student at SUNY Canton
- Student must request specific accommodations
- Student must designate what they need; we must engage in an interactive process
- Problem with accommodation? Student must let us know
- Institution may not implement accommodations that student refuses

- Students are expected to advocate for themselves

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

- Maintain academic standards for courses
- Determine course content and how it will be taught
- Confirm a student's request for accommodations and ask for clarification about a specific accommodation with Student Accessibility Services
- Award grades appropriate to the level of the student's demonstration of mastery of material
- Fail a student who does not perform to passing standards
- Refer students to Student Accessibility Services when necessary
- Provide requested accommodations and academic adjustments to students who have documented disabilities in a timely manner
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records concerning students with disabilities except when disclosure is required by law or authorized by the student
- Provide handouts, videos and other course materials in accessible formats upon request
- Evaluate students based on their abilities rather than their disabilities
- Provide exams and quizzes to SAS

Faculty do not have the right to:

- Refuse to provide an approved accommodation for a documented disability
- Challenge the legitimacy of a student's disability
- Review a student's documentation, including diagnostic data

Student Accessibility Services Rights and Responsibilities

- Determine SAS policies based on ADA and Amendments Act (ADAAA) mandates and case law
- Develop procedures to facilitate accommodations in a timely manner
- Ask student for additional documentation if alteration of accommodations is requested
- Evaluate documentation of student's disability
- Authorize and coordinate student accommodations
- Address student and instructor concerns
- Coordinate an interactive process between students and instructors to mediate questions and concerns
- Provide education regarding the parameters of the ADA/AA to the SUNY Canton community
- Maintain the college's academic standards and integrity
- Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities
- Maintain confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities

Approved Accommodations

Below are commonly requested accommodations, however this list is not exhaustive:

Extended time on tests and quizzes: Additional time is required for all timed assessments, indicated by 1.5x, 2x, etc. This includes online timed assessments.

Separate testing location: A location outside of the classroom is required. Typically, this will be in the SAS testing center.

Tests read aloud: The student requires text-to-speech technology. SUNY Canton currently uses ReadSpeak/TextAid as our designated software, but there are other tools available for free.

Speech-to-text/dictation software: The student will use dictation software for exams that are typically written or typed. This is different than a scribe.

Scribe: The student needs someone to write what they dictate.

Recording lecture: The student needs to record the lecture. *Please note that New York has a one-party consent law for audio recording, so anyone can be recording at any time.

Glean note taking software: Students need note taking support. Glean records audio and allows students to import PowerPoints and PDFs while inputting typed notes. This can be used on a laptop or a mobile device.

Priority Seating: Student requires a specific seat in the classroom (front, rear, near door, etc.).

Textbooks in Alternate Format: Student requires accessible textbooks.

Flexibility with due dates/attendance: Student requires leniency when absent from class or turning in late work. This is not a blanket extension or forgiveness for all absences.

Interpreter: Student requires an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter.

Captions on all media: The student requires captions of all media.

Personal Care Attendant: The student requires a personal aide to assist with medical or behavioral needs. The aide is an employee of the student, not the college.

Personal Care Attendant: Personal Care Attendants may be used to address the personal needs of a student with a documented disability so that they can participate in the college's activities, services, and programs. Personal needs may include transportation to/from the classroom; administering medication; assistance with toileting, dressing, and feeding needs; and monitoring, modifying or addressing the student's behavior. The duties of the personal care attendant do NOT include taking classroom notes, proctoring exams or scribing in-class writing. SUNY Canton is NOT responsible for hiring or paying for personal care attendants. Students who require a personal care attendant must register with Student Accessibility Services and sign a Personal Care Attendant Agreement which outlines the responsibilities of both the student and the attendant. If an issue arises with the attendant, please contact SAS or University Police as the situation requires.

Service Animals: It is important to note that a student using a service animal is not required to register with Student Accessibility Services. Service animals are legally defined as "any dog that is individually

trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.” There is no national registry for service animals, although there are many scam websites that will give a “certification”. Faculty and staff are allowed to only ask two questions regarding a service animal.

1. Is the dog required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Please remember that you are not allowed to ask what the disability is, or for the dog to demonstrate its task. However, if the dog proves to be not trained or a danger to others, please contact University Police.

Providing Accommodations

As of June 2020, SUNY Canton has streamlined the process for notifying faculty of approved student accommodations. All accommodation notices will now be distributed through the Symplicity Accommodate system.

When a student is approved for accommodations through Student Accessibility Services, faculty will receive an email notification prompting them to log into Accommodate. This system allows faculty to view and acknowledge accommodation letters, access relevant information for each of their courses, and manage testing requests in a centralized, secure location.

Faculty are expected to:

- Log into Accommodate upon receiving the email notification.
- Review the student's accommodation letter promptly.
- Acknowledge receipt of the accommodation via electronic signature within the system.
- Refer to Accommodate regularly to manage accommodations and stay informed of any updates or additional requests submitted by students.

This updated process ensures timely communication, protects student confidentiality, and allows for a more efficient and consistent method of implementing accommodations.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding an accommodation or encounter issues accessing Accommodate, please contact Student Accessibility Services at sas@canton.edu or **315-386-7392**.

Using Symplicity Accommodate

Symplicity Accommodate is a web-based platform designed to streamline the management of student accommodations. As a faculty member, you can use Accommodate to access accommodation letters, manage testing accommodations, and communicate with Student Accessibility Services (SAS).

1. Logging into Accommodate
 - a. Use your institutional credentials to sign in.
 - b. Select “Faculty” under “What type of user are you?”
 - c. Navigate to your institution’s Accommodate portal.

Note: You may not have access to Accommodate until a student in your course has requested accommodations.

2. Viewing Accommodation Letters
 - a. Review the accommodations and, if required, provide an electronic signature to acknowledge receipt.
 - b. Click on the student's name to view their letter.
 - c. Log into Accommodate and click on the "Accommodation Letters" tab.
 - d. When a student requests accommodations, you'll receive an email notification.
3. Viewing Students with Accommodations in Your Courses
 - a. Students with accommodations will have approved accommodations listed next to their names.
 - b. Choose your course and click "Enrolled Students."
 - c. Select the "Courses" tab in Accommodate.
4. Managing Testing Accommodations
 - a. Upload the exam file into Accommodate and approve the request.
 - b. Provide information such as class time, allowed materials, and special instructions.
 - c. Click on the student's name to review their request.
 - d. Navigate to the "Courses" tab, select your course, and choose "Exam" or "Alternative Test Room Bookings."
 - e. When a student requests testing accommodations, you'll receive an email.
5. Accessibility Settings
 - a. Upload accessible documents such as tagged PDFs.
 - b. Adjust your profile settings for screen reader compatibility.
6. Additional Support
 - a. Refer to institutional tutorials and support documents for detailed guidance.
 - b. Contact Student Accessibility Services with questions or issues.

Testing Accommodations in Accommodate

Step 1: Receive Notification of Student Request

When a student submits a testing accommodation request, faculty will receive an email alert through the Accommodate system. This email will include the course, date of exam, and specific accommodation details.

Note: Students must submit their exam request at least 48 hours before the scheduled exam. Late requests are only accepted under extenuating circumstances and at the discretion of SAS.

Step 2: Log into Accommodate

1. Go to the Symplicity Accommodate portal.
2. Select "Faculty" and log in using your SUNY Canton credentials.
3. Click on the "Courses" tab on the left menu.
4. Select the course associated with the testing request.

Step 3: Review the Student's Request

1. Navigate to the "Alternative Testing" section.
2. Locate the student's request and click to view details.
3. Review:
 - a. Date and time of the exam
 - b. Testing accommodations requested (e.g., extended time, separate location, assistive technology)
 - c. Notes from the student, if applicable

Step 4: Submit Exam Materials and Instructions

To ensure proper proctoring, please provide:

- Exam File (PDF, Word, or other editable format)
- Class Duration (how much time the class gets)
- Approved Testing Materials (calculator, notes, formula sheet, etc.)
- Contact Method (how to reach you during the test in case of questions or issues)
- Special Instructions, if applicable (e.g., start sections in order, skip questions, scratch paper usage)

How to upload:

1. In the student's testing request, scroll to the bottom and select "Upload Exam".
2. Choose the file(s) and submit.
3. Confirm the upload by checking the status or receiving confirmation via email.

Tip: You may upload the exam as soon as it's ready, even before the day of the exam. Last-minute uploads may delay the start of the student's testing session.

Step 5: Exam Day Protocol

- The student will complete the exam in the SAS Testing Center (Payson Hall 216).
- SAS staff will adhere strictly to the instructions you provide.
- If an issue arises during the exam, SAS will attempt to contact you using the information provided.

Step 6: Exam Pickup

- Faculty are responsible for retrieving completed exams.
- SAS will not deliver or scan exams.
- Students may not be sent to return exams under any circumstances.
- If someone else will retrieve the exam, please notify SAS in advance.

Additional Reminders

- Exams should be submitted at least 24 hours before the test.
- If you are offering the class a make-up exam or alternate time, coordinate with SAS early to ensure space availability.
- If you believe a request may conflict with the integrity of your exam, contact SAS immediately to engage in an interactive resolution process.

Accessibility for All

Accommodation, while important, only help to make courses accessible after the fact, acting as a band-aid over educational practices that do not account for diverse learning needs. Additionally, accommodations force students to self-disclose their disability in order to receive support. ADA compliance is a low bar by which to set standards. By designing courses intentionally from the start, there are many things that you as a professor can do to make the learning environment inclusive and accessible to everyone, not just students with disabilities.

What is Universal Design for Learning?

Universal design for learning (UDL) is a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates unnecessary hurdles in the learning process. This means developing a flexible learning environment in which information is presented in multiple ways, students engage in learning in a variety of ways, and students are provided options when demonstrating their learning.

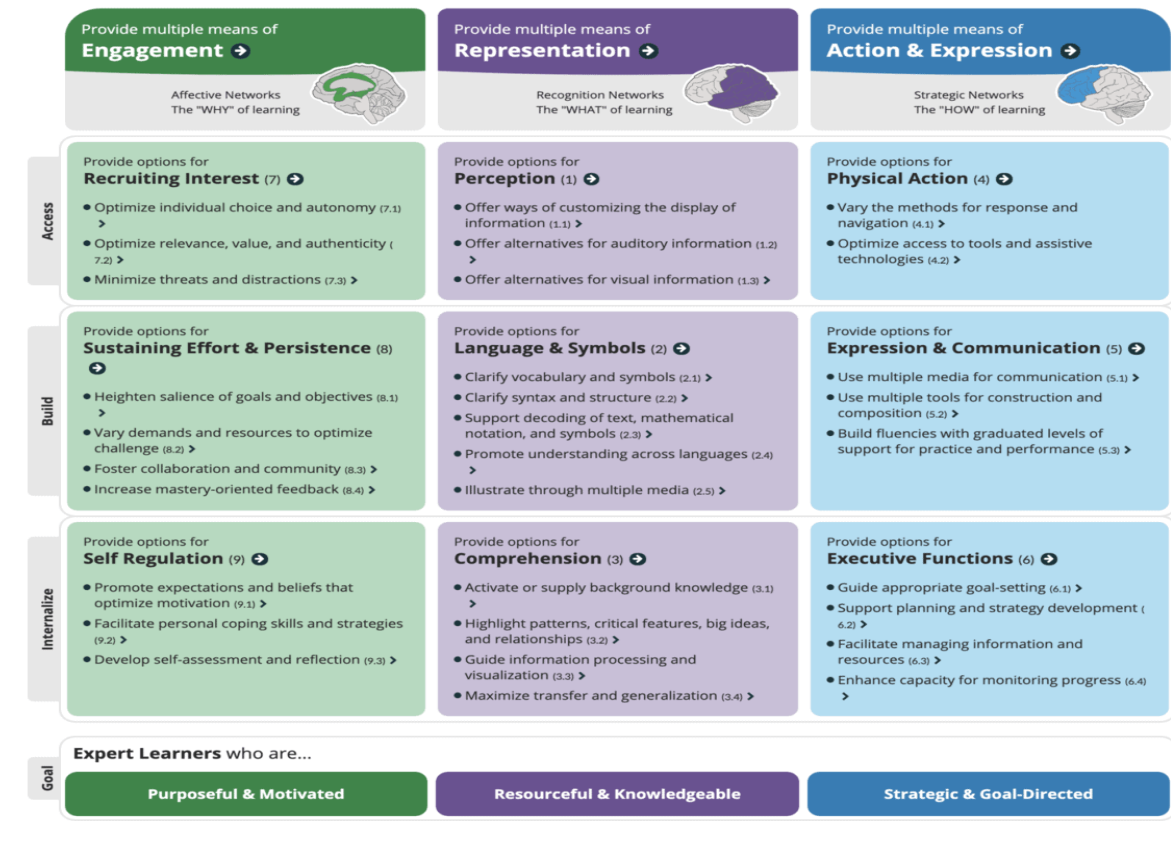
There are three principles of UDL. The three principles are:

1. Provide multiple means of representation
2. Provide multiple means of action and expression
3. Provide multiple means of engagement

UDL can seem intimidating, but when put into practice can make learning better and less stressful for students and faculty alike. When creating your course content, consider your materials, how you present the materials, and how you are assessing students' mastery of the materials. For example, question whether weekly multiple-choice quizzes are the best way to measure students' learning. Could the same be achieved with a project, presentation, or other assessment?

There are wonderful resources on [UDL in Higher Education](#), including course design and assessment.

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines



Frequently asked questions and scenarios

Q: Can I just give the whole class double time on an exam?

A: No. Extended time is determined by the amount of time given to the class at large, so by giving everyone double time, a student with an extended time accommodation would get double the “double” time. If you create an exam that should take an hour, a student with double time will get two hours.

Q. If I give extra time for an online quiz, won't the student just cheat?

A. No. Students are granted extra time accommodation based on a need. This means that they need extra time to process the question and give a thoughtful answer. If students can cheat easily on your quiz, consider the type of assessment you are giving. Could you change the method of assessment to make it more meaningful, following the guidelines of Universal Design for Learning?

Q. Can I ban audio recording of my lecture?

A. No. Under New York State law, any student has the right to record whether or not it's an approved accommodation.

Q. Can I ban laptop use during my class?

A. Yes, that is a policy that can be implemented. However, students that require the use of a laptop or tablet during class will now need to be accommodated. This goes against Universal Design for Learning and creates a barrier that wasn't there originally. Question whether a policy that limits accessibility is beneficial for the students in your class.

Q. I give a quick quiz at the beginning of my 8:00am lecture, how do students receive their testing accommodations?

A. Students with extra time/separate location accommodation should arrange to take it after class in SAS. However, if the student is willing and able to be proctored before the quiz, the faculty can arrange to meet them before class.

Q. A student had a medical situation and asked for an extension for some work. Do I need to wait for official accommodations?

A. Not necessarily. If the student has a temporary disability, they will want to set up an accommodation plan with SAS. However, the faculty can grant extensions on homework and exams as they see fit. Please remember that illnesses like COVID-19 or the flu are not considered disabilities, unless there are complications that impact the student's learning long-term.

Q. Are service animals allowed in labs?

A. Yes. However, if the environment is hazardous to the animal, the animal must wear protective equipment. In lab where having a service animal will fundamentally alter the lab, the service animal might need to be kept near, but not in, the laboratory.

Q. What if I accidentally forget to implement a student's accommodation?

A. Mistakes happen. If you realize an accommodation was not implemented, please reach out to the

student as soon as possible and contact Student Accessibility Services. We will work with you and the student to determine an appropriate resolution.

Q. A student handed me a letter from their doctor asking for accommodations. Is that enough?

A. No. All accommodations must be approved and communicated through Student Accessibility Services. If a student presents outside documentation, please refer them to SAS to initiate the formal process.

Q. Can I ask a student for more information about their disability?

A. No. Disability information is confidential, and students are not required to disclose the nature of their diagnosis. Your role is to implement the accommodations as outlined in the official notice from SAS.

Q. What do I do if I believe an accommodation fundamentally alters my course requirements?

A. Faculty are not expected to compromise essential course elements. If you believe an accommodation may do so, please contact SAS to engage in an interactive process. We will work together to find a reasonable solution that maintains the integrity of your course.

Q. How do I upload exams for accommodated testing?

A. You can securely upload exams through the Accommodate portal. Be sure to include all relevant instructions, allowed materials, and a method of contact during the exam. Exams should be submitted at least 24 hours in advance to ensure timely proctoring.

Q. Can a student choose not to use their approved accommodations?

A. Yes. Students are not required to use their accommodations and may choose to proceed without them for any given assignment or exam. However, accommodations are not retroactive — if a student chooses not to use an accommodation and then struggles, faculty are not obligated to make adjustments after the fact.

Q. I'm teaching an online course. Do accommodations still apply?

A. Yes. Accommodations apply to both in-person and online courses. Faculty are responsible for ensuring that their online materials are accessible and that any time-based accommodations are applied to online quizzes, tests, and assignments.

Q. How can I make sure my materials are accessible from the start?

A. Consider implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Use clear headings, provide alternative text for images, caption all videos, and offer materials in multiple formats. The Center for Learning Design can assist you in building accessible course content.

Special Thanks

Thank you to the SAS staff, Heather Lauzon and Patricia Endres, as well as Stacia Smith, Kristine Potter, Emily Hamilton-Honey, and Tonka Jokelova for their contributions to this guide.

"If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn." - Ignacio Estrada