## Accessible Educational Services Guidelines and Suggestions

### Forward

This guide's goal is to provide information to instructors who have students with disabilities in class. It is not the instructor's responsibility to identify disabilities. This guide is intended for information and guidance only. Accessible Educational Services will provide further guidance.

### Mission Statement

Indiana University South Bend understands and endorses the ideal that everyone should be equally able to learn. Accessible Educational Services is committed to assisting the university community so that people with disabilities are assured an equal opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all university programs, services, and activities. AES supports disabled individuals in achieving their academic potential to the greatest extent possible by coordinating reasonable accommodations and facilitating services. We are committed to providing equal access to higher education for academically qualified individuals with disabilities.

### Introduction

Faculty members can greatly enhance the learning process for disabled students by adapting their teaching methods. However, it must be understood that despite their attempts to accommodate a student's needs, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to undertake sufficient study to ensure academic success. In addition, a student requiring specific accommodations must make them known to the instructor with proper documentation rather than expecting their disability to be identified and services without prior notification. These accommodations are provided to ensure that the student has an equal opportunity to excel in academic studies. Suggestions based on the students' personal experiences are invaluable in facilitating this process. It must also be stressed that instructors are not required to go beyond to understand the situation faced by a student with a disability. Evaluations should, therefore, be honest and fair without overcompensating for the disability.

A lack of understanding of a person's disability can often result in a great deal of discomfort and awkwardness. These negative emotions are frequently sensed by the individual, further exacerbating the situation and causing a breakdown in essential communications. It is necessary to remember the similarities disabled people share with others, which are much more significant than their disability.

### Policies Concerning Students with Disabilities

Indiana University South Bend will:

1. Conform to the relevant federal, state, and university policies, regulations, and definitions regarding students with disabilities.
2. Provide services to students with disabilities through Accessible Educational Services necessary to meet external and internal policies and laws.
3. Uphold academic standards in the context of these policies and services.
4. Ethically and legally commit its units and faculty to reasonably modify programs and courses to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Note: Where applicable, published technical standards must be met before admission to these programs.

1. Require that students provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose the disability before receiving services. The students will be responsible for the costs associated with documenting their disabilities.
2. Collaborate with Accessible Educational Services and IU South Bend units to assist students with disabilities in obtaining special accommodations.
3. Provide emergency care for a student in crisis; however, faculty members are not obligated to provide direct care but will take appropriate action to ensure that care is provided.
4. Maintain legally appropriate confidentiality of students with disabilities.

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Congress passed the ADA in 1990 with staggered implementation dates. The five sections of the act cover Employment, Public Accommodations, Transportation, State and Local Government Operations, and Telecommunications.

The university is affected by several of these areas. These areas include but are not limited to:

1. “All government facilities, services, and communications must be accessible, consistent with the requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.”
2. “Reasonable changes in policies, practices, and procedures must be made to avoid discrimination.”
3. “Public accommodations may not discriminate based on disability...”
4. "Physical barriers in existing facilities must be removed if removal is readily achievable."
5. “Auxiliary Aids and services must be provided to individuals with vision or hearing impairments or others with disabilities unless an undue burden would result.”

The act for ‘reasonable modifications’ in the accommodation of such persons. If reasonable modifications are not evident, effort must be made to look for accommodations. The act does not require those resulting in an ‘undue burden’ or ‘significant difficulty or expense’. Neither term is defined. For example, a faculty member would be expected to consult with Accessible Educational Services before concluding that a requested modification could not be provided.

### Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

“No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely because of their handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.”

Section 504 mandates that a person with a documented disability cannot be denied access to curricular or extracurricular activities or participation here at IU South Bend – if they meet the academic and technical standards requisite to admission – and can perform the essential tasks/assignments when appropriate and reasonable accommodations are made.

A person with a disability means ‘any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working; has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.’

Some disabilities are readily apparent, while others are not. Additionally, some students with the same diagnosis have differing abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Our efforts aim to enable students to achieve their academic goals by augmenting their strengths and abilities. Ultimately, a student should receive accommodations only when faced with a task requiring a skill their disability precludes.

It is our responsibility to work with students to identify and implement academic accommodations to ensure that they have equal educational opportunities to those of their non-disabled peers.

### Student Responsibilities

Schedule an interview and meet with Accessible Educational Services as soon as admitted to the university and at the beginning of every subsequent semester.

1. Provide recent documentation/evaluation from a licensed professional.
2. Help develop and identify appropriate accommodations – a letter will be generated for instructors.
3. Deliver the letter of introduction and accommodations to each instructor.
4. Discuss the accommodations as needed with each instructor.

### Documentation Guidelines

The following guidelines are provided to ensure that the documentation is adequate and appropriate to verify eligibility and support a request for accommodations or auxiliary aids.

Disability documentation should include:

1. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability, current diagnostic evaluation date, and the original diagnosis from a qualified licensed professional.
2. A description of the diagnostic criteria or diagnostic tests used.
3. A description of the current functional impact or limitations of the disability.
4. Treatments, medications, assistive devices, or services prescribed or used.
5. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability over time.

Guidelines of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) for documentation of learning disabilities will be referred to in reviewing documentation on learning disabilities.

### Statement of Confidentiality

Student files are confidential to the extent allowed by law and are kept in a secured location in Accessible Educational Services. No one outside AES may access these files without the student's written permission or as state and federal law allows.

### Communication Basics

A key point to remember when communicating with a person with a disability is to focus on the person rather than on the disability. Often our language reflects this through statements such as ‘a person who has a mental illness’ rather than ‘a mentally ill person.’ We can then focus on the person as an individual rather than tending to stereotype those with disabilities. The fact that an individual has a disability does not necessarily mean that they have a handicap. Handicaps are those external obstacles, such as physical barriers, public attitudes, etc., that hinder a person's participation and acceptance.

### Hearing Impaired Students

The term ‘hearing impaired’ refers to anyone with any type or degree of hearing loss. The term may be used with qualifying adjectives such as ‘mild,’ ‘moderate,’ ‘severe,’ and ‘profound’ to denote the degree of impairment.

**Deaf:** ‘Deaf’ refers to a hearing-impaired person in whom the auditory sense is sufficiently damaged to preclude the auditory development and comprehension of speech and language with or without sound amplification.

**Hard of Hearing:** ‘Hard of hearing’ defines a hearing-impaired person in whom the sense of hearing, although defective, is functional with or without a hearing aid and whose speech and language, although deviant, will be developed through an auditory base.

For many hearing-impaired or deaf people, one of the few ways to communicate is through lip reading. However, it has been shown that even for the most accomplished lip readers, only between 30 and 40 percent of the sounds of spoken English can be read effectively. Sign language is a widely used form of communication, the most popular of which is American Sign Language (ASL). Fingerspelling is commonly used in sign language, whereby words are spelled out using finger and hand positions. The intricacy of this process is apparent; therefore, it must be understood that spoken English is often the second language of the hearing-impaired person in the same way that sign language is a whole new form of communication for those without a hearing impairment. Consequently, instructors should consider this obstacle students face when observing the grammatical content of written work. This should not color their judgment, and errors should be identified and brought to the student’s notice for them to improve. The most frequently used method utilized by hearing impaired students to improve their comprehension of vocal communication is the use of a hearing aid. These are now highly advanced due to rapid advances in technology and effectively amplify sounds, enabling the hearing-impaired person to learn in the classroom environment. Of course, it should be recognized that the levels of hearing impairment are on a continuum, and specific needs depend on the severity of the disability. Therefore, it is recommended that the instructor discuss the student's needs before the commencement of classes.

### Suggested Classroom Accommodations

1. Use visual aids such as film, overhead projectors, diagrams, and chalkboards to reinforce content learning.
2. Many students may like to tape the lectures so that they can play them back later at a louder volume.
3. Face the class when talking and stay in adequate lighting to facilitate lip reading. Instructors may consider using the overhead projection system to replace the chalkboard, enabling them to simultaneously write and face the class.
4. Avoid pacing during a lecture; it makes lip reading more difficult.
5. Use facial expressions and gestures to improve communication.
6. Attract the attention of the hearing-impaired student before speaking with a cue such as a tap on the shoulder or a wave.
7. Speak clearly and naturally without exaggerating lip movements or volume.
8. Avoid standing in front of a light source like a window, the glare from behind makes it difficult to read lips.
9. Do not chew gum or obstruct the area around your mouth with your hands or other objects that interfere with speech reading.
10. Seat hearing-impaired students where there is an unobstructed view of the professor.
11. Try to repeat comments and questions asked by other students who are not within the student's vision range.
12. Provide a script or outline of slides, films, or videotaped materials.
13. Assure the conveyance to hearing-impaired students of important information like class cancellations, class relocation, assignments, and tests by stating the details in writing in a handout and on the chalkboard.
14. Establish a system of getting messages to the student--especially if a tutor/note taker or interpreter is not given advance notice of class cancellation and changes.
15. Be prepared to reword sentences when a hearing-impaired student does not understand what is said. (Persons with hearing impairments may smile in acknowledgment when they have not understood.)
16. Be objective when evaluating written materials from hearing-impaired students. Advise students to seek tutoring assistance when they have grammar and syntax problems and cannot express themselves fluently.
17. Keep background noise to a minimum.

### Test Adaptation and Administration

1. Oral test administration with the aid of the interpreter.
2. Extended time for taking tests in a quiet place.
3. Use tutors or aids to administer tests. Discuss testing arrangements early in the semester to ensure the process is smooth when it is time to schedule and administer tests.

### Visually Impaired Students

A person is legally blind when visual acuity is 20/200 or worse (with correction) in the better eye or if the field of vision is limited to a narrow angle, usually less than 20 degrees. Since approximately 75 percent of all legally blind individuals have some usable vision, we should reserve the term blindness for complete loss of sight. Visually impaired is a more suitable description for people whose sight is affected. It is often difficult to identify visually impaired people who read texts, take notes, and get around without assistance. Often, however, in order for them to do this, some form of assistance is required, such as magnified texts, note-takers, or recorded books.

Blind students have often mastered techniques for dealing with their disability by the time they reach college (unless newly blinded). However, the widespread use of visual aids in the current educational environment poses further difficulties for blind students who must find alternative means of absorbing subject matter. Combining methods, including readers, braille books, and recorded books and lectures, enables the blind student to transfer this material into a more accessible medium. Many blind students who use Braille may prefer to take notes using a brailler or make a copy of a classmate’s notes to be transcribed later. These notes may also be recorded onto audio tape by a reader. Similarly, visually impaired students often prefer to record lectures.

### Communication and Classroom Accommodations

1. Introduce yourself and anyone else who might be present when speaking to a student with
2. a visual impairment.
3. Use a normal voice level when speaking; remember that a vision-impaired student has sight problems, not hearing loss.
4. Speak directly to the student and address him or her by name.
5. Do not hesitate to use words such as see or look; students with vision impairments also use these terms.
6. When walking with a visually impaired student, allow him or her to take your arm just above the elbow. Walk naturally and at a pace acceptable to the individual.
7. When offering a seat to a vision-impaired student, place the student’s hand on the back or arm of the seat. This gives the student a frame of reference to seat him or herself.
8. Do not hesitate to ask students what adaptations are required in the classroom. The student is the “expert” about their needs.
9. Discuss necessary classroom accommodations and testing adaptations early in the semester.
10. It may take three to six weeks to get taped textbooks.
11. Be open to students taping your lectures.
12. Provide appropriate written and verbal descriptions to accompany any visual aids, diagrams, films, or videos you might use in class.
13. As you write on the chalkboard or discuss a diagram, verbalize what you are writing. Remember to spell them out or give descriptions if appropriate when using technical terms.
14. Try to speak directly to the class, remembering that turning your head away can muffle sound; body language and gestures cannot be seen.

### Mobility Impairments

Mobility impairments affect an individual's coordination or motor skills. Diseases such as multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, and polio, as well as conditions such as cerebral palsy and spinal cord injuries, often contribute to motor skill impairments.

**Muscular Dystrophy:** Muscular dystrophy causes a weakening and eventual deterioration of muscle tissue.

**Cerebral Palsy:** Cerebral palsy may affect the movement of various body parts, speech, hearing, and vision.

**Multiple Sclerosis and Spinal Cord:** A disease of the central nervous system and injuries to the spinal cord often cause paralysis in the form of paraplegia (paralysis of the lower half of the body or part of it), quadriparesis (weakness in all four extremities), or hemiplegia (paralysis of one lateral half of the body).

Since most individuals with mobility impairments use wheelchairs, accessibility to buildings and classrooms is critical. If necessary, classes may be moved to locations accessible by wheelchairs or limited walkers. The height of lab tablets and desks should be adjusted to accommodate wheelchairs.

Students with broken bones, pulled muscles, and sprained ankles may need special assistance even though the disability is only temporary. Often, these students are unaware of the ramifications of their temporary disability. They may underestimate the time it takes to get to class on crutches or in a wheelchair.

**Mobility Accommodations**

1. Students with mobility limitations will ask for assistance when needed. Do not assume that assistance is needed.
2. When conversing with someone in a wheelchair, sit so that you are at the person's eye level whenever possible.
3. Leaning on a wheelchair is tantamount to learning on a person's shoulder; it is an invasion of personal space.
4. When discussing a student's disability and accommodations and adaptation needs, talk only about needs that are relevant to the successful completion of coursework.
5. Keep all information confidential.
6. If a student's speech is affected by a disability and is difficult to understand, do not hesitate to ask the student to repeat.

### Speech Impairments

Speech impairments may have many causes, including hearing loss, illness, injury, and congenital or psychological conditions. They can occur alone or in combination with other disabilities.

Speech impairments range from problems with articulation or voice strength to an inability to speak. Unless the impairment is recent, students with speech impairments generally have had some speech therapy. Common speech impairments encountered are stuttering, chronic hoarseness, difficulty in evoking an appropriate word or term, and esophageal speech (resulting from a laryngectomy).

Many speech-impaired students are reluctant to participate in activities that require speaking. Even if the student has adjusted well to speech impairment, new situations may enhance past anxieties. Self-expression should be encouraged; however, pressure to speak is not likely to be helpful. Speaking in front of a group can be an agonizing experience for a speech-impaired student.

Various communication aids are available for students who cannot speak. Students who can type may use portable electronic aids that produce computer printouts, display words on LED screens, or have synthesizing equipment with a keyboard activated by a head pointer or mouth wand.

**Communication and Classroom Accommodations**

1. Understanding impaired speech improves with continued exposure and listening, as does understanding a foreign accent.
2. Be patient and listen.
3. Do not provide words or finish sentences for a person who stutters or speaks with difficulty; let the person complete their thoughts.
4. Allow students with communication disabilities to participate in class discussions as much as possible, even if extra time is necessary.
5. If the course requires oral communication and the student cannot communicate orally, arrange for alternative methods, such as written communication, that might be shared with the class.
6. Encourage participation, but do not require a student with a communication difficulty to speak in front of the class.
7. Allow students who cannot communicate orally to use a typewriter, word processor, signboard, or sign to interpret in class.
8. If you do not understand what is being said, do not pretend to know; tell the student you do not understand and allow them to repeat the communication.
9. Students with speech impairments seldom require the test adaptations that students with other disabilities need.
10. Written assignments or responses to specific questions that can be shared with the class by someone reading them aloud are an alternative to oral presentations.
11. Faculty and class members should be patient with students who choose to participate orally, offering encouragement and an opportunity to develop self-confidence in a challenging situation.

**Learning Disabilities**

**Reading**

1. Confusion of similar words, difficulty using phonics, problems reading multisyllabic words.
2. Slow reading rate and/or difficulty adjusting speed to the nature of the reading task.
3. Difficulty with comprehension and retention of reading material, but not with oral materials.
4. Difficulty identifying important points and themes.
5. Skipping words or lines of printed materials.
6. Difficulty reading for long periods of time.

**Writing**

1. Difficulty with sentence structure, poor grammar, and omitted words.
2. Frequent spelling errors (omissions, substitutions, transpositions), inconsistent spelling, letter reversals.
3. Poorly formed letters, difficulty with spacing, capitals, and punctuation.
4. Difficulty planning a topic and organizing thoughts on paper.
5. Difficulty effectively proofreading written work and making revisions.
6. Composition is often limited in length.
7. Slow written production.

**Math**

1. Difficulty memorizing basic facts.
2. Confusion or reversal of numbers, number sequences, or operational symbols.
3. Difficulty copying problems and aligning columns.
4. Difficulty reading or comprehending word problems.
5. Problems with reasoning and abstract concepts.
6. Confuses operational symbols, especially + and x.

**Oral Language**

1. Difficulty attending to spoken language, inconsistent concentration.
2. Difficulty expressing ideas orally, which the student otherwise seems to understand.
3. Problems describing events or stories in proper sequences.
4. Residual problems with grammar and difficulty with inflectional or derivational endings.

**Attention and Concentration**

1. Trouble focusing and sustaining attention on academic tasks.
2. Fluctuating attention span during lectures.
3. Easily distracted by outside stimuli.
4. Difficulty juggling multiple tasks demands, overloads quickly.
5. Hyperactivity and excessive movements may accompany the inability to focus attention.

**Study Skills**

1. Poor organization and time management.
2. Difficulty following directions.
3. Poor organization of notes and other written materials.
4. Needs more time to complete assignments.
5. Slow to start and complete tasks.
6. Repeated inability, on a day-to-day basis, to recall what has been taught.
7. Difficulty interpreting charts and graphs.
8. Inefficient use of library and reference materials.
9. Difficulty preparing for and taking tests.

**Faculty Note about Learning Disabled Students**

Some students with learning disabilities may approach faculty with requests for specific modifications of procedures, but only when necessary. Federal law requires reasonable accommodations for the handicapped for mastery of course content and allows students with learning disabilities to use appropriate alternative methods to demonstrate their knowledge (e.g., taped exams). Of course, the standards of appropriateness will vary according to the course's subject matter. Still, it is generally the case that because of their disability, students with learning disabilities are at a disadvantage in most exam situations before they begin. Consequently, appropriate accommodations do not give students with learning disabilities an advantage but rather allow them an equal opportunity to express what they have learned.

**Suggested Practices**

The following are suggested practices that will help all of your students, but especially students with learning disabilities, to function more independently and efficiently.

1. Provide a clear and detailed syllabus explaining the expectations, topics, and procedures for each class session.
2. Structure each class session with a review of previous materials and an outline of current materials. At the end of the class, summarize important points.
3. Emphasize new or technical vocabulary. Present it on an overhead projector or a handout.
4. Give students ample opportunity for questions, clarifications, and review sessions.
5. Offer study questions that indicate the relative importance of content and the format of possible test questions.
6. Encourage students to make an appointment during your office hours to self-disclose. Ask students who identify themselves how you can assist in facilitating course materials.
7. Speak directly to students and use gestures and natural expressions to convey further meaning.
8. If possible, select a textbook with an accompanying study guide for optional student use.
9. Notice and respond to non-verbal signals of confusion or frustration.
10. Try to eliminate or at least diminish auditory and visual classroom distractions, such as noise in the hallways or flickering fluorescent lights.

**Why Do Students Need Testing Accommodations?**

There are several reasons why students may need testing accommodations. For example, some students with upper-body mobility impairments may have trouble writing. Because of this impairment, they may need more time to complete an exam. This gives that student the same advantages as the other students in the class.

**Suggested Testing/Evaluation Accommodations**

1. Allow extended time on exams.
2. Provide a reader or tape-recorded exam when the exam entails much reading.
3. Allow the student to take the exam in a separate room that is a distraction-free environment.
4. Allow students to answer exam questions using methods other than writing, such as orally, tapping, or typing.
5. Allow students to clarify or rephrase an exam question in their own words as a comprehension check before answering the question.
6. Analyze, whenever appropriate (for example, in solving math, chemistry, or physics problems) not only the final solutions but also the process the student used to reach the solution.
7. Allow alternative methods to demonstrate mastery of course objectives (e.g., a research project, class demonstration, oral presentation, paper).
8. Allow students to use computational aids, such as a multiplication table or a calculator, and various spelling aids, such as a secretary’s desk reference, Franklin Speller, and a spell checker on a word processor.
9. Avoid unduly complex sentence structure, such as double negatives and embedding questions within questions.
10. Provide ample blank space or additional exam booklets for students with overly large handwriting.
11. Provide alternatives to computer-scored answer sheets, such as allowing students to indicate their answers directly on the exam.
12. Encourage the formation of study groups.
13. Critique early drafts of papers, providing pointers and encouragement to follow-up rewrites.
14. Conduct oral quizzes to supplement written exams.
15. Give less weight to spelling when that disability is severe.

**Assistive Technology**

Indiana University South Bend provides the following technology to help students with disabilities achieve their education goals. Any individual needing such equipment should contact AES.

**Available through the Library**

1. Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) - Enlarges printed material onto a monitor.
2. Cassette Tape Player – Allows students to record classes.

**Available through ATAC**

1. Accessible Keyboards – Options include one-handed, ergonomic, and large print.
2. Accessible Mice – Options include trackballs, vertical mice, and touchpads.
3. intact Sketchpad – Portable tool to create tactile graphics.
4. Talking scientific calculator – Speaks numbers as input and the total.
5. Dragon Professional – Allows individuals to control their computers using their voice and speech-to-text capability.
6. Fusion – ZoomText (screen magnification) and JAWS (screen reading).
7. Glean Note Taker – Recording software for students taking notes.
8. Thorium – Text-to-speech for PDFs and DRM-free EPUBs.

**Recommended Sources of Information**

**Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)**

16810 Kenton Drive

Suite 220

Huntersville NC 28078

Telephone: (704) 947-7779

Fax: (704) 948-7779

**Center for Parent Information & Resources**

570 Broad Street, Suite 702

Newark, NJ 07102

Telephone: (973) 642-8100

Email: [CPIR@spanadvocacy.org](mailto:CPIR@spanadvocacy.org)

**College Board SSD Program**

P.O. Box 7504

London, KY 40742

Telephone: (844) 255-7728

Email: [ssd@info.collegeboard.org](mailto:ssd@info.collegeboard.org)

**Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD)**

11184 Antioch Road, Box 405

Overland Park, KS 66210

Telephone: (844) 255-7728

**International Dyslexia Society**

1829 Reisterstown Road, Suite 350

Pikesville, MD 21208

Telephone: (410) 296-0232

Email: [info@dyslexiaida.org](mailto:info@dyslexiaida.org)

**International Literacy Association**

PO Box 7168

Newark, DE 19714

Telephone: (800) 336-7323

Email: [customerservice@reading.org](mailto:customerservice@reading.org)

**Learning Disabilities Association of America**

4068 Mount Royal Boulevard, Suite 224B

Allison Park, PA 15101

Telephone: (412) 341-1515

Email: [info@LDAAmerica.org](mailto:info@LDAAmerica.org)

**National Center for Learning Disabilities**

1220 L Street, NW Ste. 100 Box #168

Washington, DC 20005

Telephone: (301) 966-2234

**National Library service for the Blind and Print Disabled, Library of Congress**

101 Independence Ave., SE

Washington, D.C. 20540

Telephone: (202) 707-5100

Email: [nls@loc.gov](mailto:nls@loc.gov)

**National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC)**

8400 Corporate Drive, Suite 500

Landover, MD 20785

Telephone: (800) 346-2742

Email: [naricinfo@heitechservices.com](mailto:naricinfo@heitechservices.com)

**Office of Disability Employment Policy**

200 Constitution Ave NW

Washington, DC 20210

Telephone: (866) 487-2365

**U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights**

Chicago Office

John C. Kluczynski Federal Building

230 S. Dearborn Street, 37th Floor

Chicago, IL 60604

Telephone: (312) 730-1560

Email: [OCR.Chicago@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Chicago@ed.gov)