

SDS

student
disability
services

Information for Faculty: Accommodating Students With Disabilities

Cornell University is required by federal disability laws to ensure that qualified students with disabilities are afforded equitable access to the university's programs and services. As needed, modifications to policies and practices (accommodations) are provided to ensure equitable access.

The disability accommodation process at Cornell

- Student Disability Services (SDS) is responsible for determining eligibility for disability services for students and engaging in the interactive process with students and faculty to determine appropriate reasonable accommodations.
- Instructors implement many approved academic accommodations within their courses, determine the essential requirements of their course and consult with SDS about appropriate reasonable accommodations.
- Students must self-identify, submit the required disability documentation and follow procedures to request and use accommodations and services.

The role of faculty in the process

- Inform students of the accommodation procedure in your course.
Sample syllabus statement:
Students with Disabilities: It's important to me that you be able to access my course and its materials. Please give to [the Professor, TA, the Course Coordinator] your Student Disability Services accommodation letter early in the semester (a deadline may be provided) so that we have adequate time to arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you need an immediate accommodation for equal access, please speak with me after class or send an email message to me and/or to SDS at sds_cu@cornell.edu. If the need arises for additional accommodations during the semester, please contact SDS. SDS is located on Level 5 of Cornell Health, 607-254-4545, sds.cornell.edu.



The purpose of accommodations is to provide equitable opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in a course while still meeting essential course requirements.

- Provide the accommodations listed on the SDS accommodation letter. Contact the student's SDS Counselor listed on the accommodation letter if you have questions about the approved accommodation, if you believe that a student is not using an accommodation responsibly, or if you think an approved accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of a course requirement.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the student's disability status. Administrative Assistants and TAs may be informed of a student's access needs for the purpose of facilitating accommodations.
- Hold students with disabilities to the same academic standards as non-disabled peers.
- Refer students to SDS who are asking for disability accommodations and have not provided an SDS accommodation letter to SDS.
- Modify classroom rules/policies to accommodate a student with a disability. SDS and the instructor must make an individualized assessment when a student seeks modifications to policies for disability reasons; such as needing to take a make-up exam or extensions to deadlines. Consult with SDS (as needed) when students request modifications to policies for disability-related reasons.

Services for Equal Access

Web:
sds.cornell.edu

Phone (voice):
607-254-4545

Fax:
607-255-1562

Email:
sds_cu@cornell.edu

Appointments:
Monday–Friday

Appointments:
Monday–Friday
[Check web for hours](#)

Cornell Health
Student Advocacy
Suite, Level 5
110 Ho Plaza,
Ithaca, NY
14853-3101

over

Keep in mind ...

- That the purpose of accommodations is to provide an equitable opportunity for students with disabilities to participate in your course while still meeting essential course requirements.
- That testing arrangements for students with disabilities do not have to be exactly the same as for their non-disabled peers, as long as there is not a substantial adverse impact on the student's receipt of educational benefits. For instance, a student may be asked to start an exam at an earlier time of the day so that the exam ends at a reasonable hour. Losing a few hours to study would not be considered a substantial loss of educational benefits.
- You do not have to provide accommodations retroactively.
- You may establish a reasonable deadline for currently registered students to provide accommodation letters. Students who do not provide timely notice for the use of accommodations for one exam, should be provided with the approved accommodations in the future if arrangements can be reasonably made.
- Students must not be required to miss a class in order to use testing accommodations. If the use of extended time for your in-class exam will cause a student to miss his/her next class, the use of extended time should be at the beginning of the exam or at another mutually agreed upon time.
- Students using laptops as an accommodation can not be required to sit in a designated location in the room if it will have a negative impact on their access to the course information. Students may be asked to sign an agreement that the laptop will only be used for the purpose of the accommodation.
- Notifications from Cornell Health about significant illnesses and concussions are intended to

encourage instructors to extend academic consideration for unexpected injuries and illness. If these conditions become on-going, students should be referred to SDS.

- Students with medical and mental health disabilities often experience episodic flare-ups of symptoms and do not seek medical care in each circumstance. If the student's accommodation letter has provided notice of the presence of a disability that will affect absence, additional notification of the reason for the absence should not be expected. If the student is requesting the on-going use of assignment extensions or an adjustment to the attendance policy, the student should be referred to SDS to discuss this with the SDS Counselor who will contact you if an accommodation is necessary.
- It takes time for SDS to make course materials in accessible formats (e-text, video captioning). Provide information about course materials well in advance of the term so that SDS will have the necessary time to convert course materials into an accessible format for a student.

Best practices

- Establish classroom rules that will not discriminate against students with disabilities. For instance, rather than restricting laptop use in class for all students, invite students who need a laptop for access reasons to discuss their access needs with you.
- Maintain confidentiality when emailing a group of students about accommodations. Put the email addresses in the BCC function so that students' names are not shared among the group.
- Reduce distractions during testing. Allow the use of earplugs or headphones, or space students out in the room. Most students do not require a private room for testing. SDS will make this accommodation clear in the letter if necessary for the student.

SDS Diversity Statement

The staff of SDS strives to create and sustain a welcoming, accessible, and supportive environment.

We believe that diversity strengthens our institution and envision a community free of bigotry, expressions of hatred or prejudice, and behaviors that infringe upon the freedom and respect that every individual deserves.

We are committed to expanding our understanding of the complex issues surrounding identity in order to advance the notion of "Any person ... any study."

- Put assignment deadlines and exam dates in the syllabus so that students can balance their time and manage their disability symptoms effectively. The need for deadline extensions are minimized when students can plan out their work for the semester.
- Assist students with obvious short-term injuries by allowing flexibility with deadlines, extended time to write an exam, the use of a computer use for exams, or having a TA be a scribe. If the student needs a lab assistant or has longer term needs, refer the student to SDS. See also the Managing an Injury Information Sheet.
- Keep in mind that many students are concerned about the stigma of disclosing a disability. A positive reaction to the student's self-disclosure and need for accommodation is a way to promote disability inclusion on campus.