

Disability Support Services FAQ for Faculty

What are the rights and responsibilities of a student with a disability?

Students with disabilities have the right to equal access to courses, programs, activities, services, and facilities offered at Concordia University, Nebraska. Students are also entitled to accommodations as a means of removing barriers and providing access. This is in compliance with federal law, specifically Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Students have the responsibility to self-identify, to provide appropriate documentation of their disability, and to be registered with Disability Support Services (DSS) if they would like to receive accommodations. If a student is qualified to receive accommodations, it is then up to the student to use or not use these accommodations.

All information about the student's disability is to be kept confidential.

What are the rights and responsibilities of faculty when working with students with disabilities?

A faculty member has the right to confirm a student's request for accommodation, and to ask for clarification about a specific accommodation with DSS. Faculty members do *not* have the right to refuse to provide an accommodation or to review a student's documentation including diagnostic data.

Faculty have a responsibility to work with DSS in providing reasonable accommodations, keep all records and communications with students confidential, and refer a student to DSS who requests accommodations but is not currently registered.

Faculty members do not have to provide accommodations for students who are not registered with DSS.

Why does an instructor have the responsibility to make accommodations for students with disabilities?

Accommodations provide access, making it possible for a student with a disability to overcome barriers. Accommodations can allow a student to communicate what he or she knows in the same way that glasses do not strengthen vision, but help a person to see.

The instructor also has a legal responsibility to provide appropriate accommodations, as provided for in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

How are appropriate accommodations for a student determined?

A student must submit acceptable documentation to DSS. The information is then reviewed, along with an intake interview with the student. Appropriate accommodations are determined based upon the substantial limitations of the student and the essential elements of the course.

How do I know when I am providing “accommodations” or when I am over-accommodating or going too far?

You do not have to change the curriculum of the course or modify assignments when it alters core requirements. A change in testing formats and giving extended test time is not altering the requirement of learning course material, and therefore are reasonable academic accommodations. If you feel uncomfortable with an accommodation request, please feel free to contact DSS.

Do I need to modify my typical grading process for someone with a disability?

Reasonable academic accommodations do not affect the grading process. The accommodation might involve altering the format of evaluation; for example, you might be asked to give an exam verbally instead of on paper, or you might change the format of an assignment. Otherwise, students are required to meet all academic standards regardless of disability.

If an instructor feels that a particular student may have a substantially limiting disability, to where should he or she refer the student?

The instructor can take the student aside privately and address *academic* concerns about the student. Do **NOT** ask the student if they have a disability. Rather, recommend they contact the Academic Resource Center.

Faculty can email the ARC at any time with concerns about a particular student. That way, if the student does show up for assistance, we can then have a conversation with them that may lead to either self-disclosure or referral for testing, if determined to be appropriate.

What if a student with a disability is disruptive in class?

A student with a disability who is disruptive in class should be treated just like any other student who is disruptive in class. If an instructor believes there is a medical reason for the student’s behavior, the instructor can discuss this with DSS or the campus nurse, to determine if there is a solution to the problem.

What if a student with a disability is failing, even with accommodations?

It is important for instructors to remember that providing accommodations to a student with a disability provides *access*, but does not guarantee *success* in the course. Students with disabilities have a right to *not* master the course material, just like any other student. If a student cannot meet the standards and requirements of your course, then they should be graded appropriately.