



## Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty

### Are students with disabilities admitted under a special program?

No. Student with disabilities meet the same requirements, and are admitted through the same university processes, as all other students.

### What is a Reasonable Accommodation?

A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment made to the academic environment and/or to a policy that ensures students with disabilities have equal access to course material, information, activities, programs, housing, and other university facilities and resources.

### How do students request an accommodation from the university?

Disability Services (DS) handles student requests for accommodations. Faculty should direct any student who discloses a disability and/or requests accommodation to DS. To receive accommodations, students must complete a confidential registration process using the myDS portal on the Disability Services website and submit appropriate documentation. This is followed by a meeting between DS staff and the student to discuss whether the proposed accommodation is reasonable and make an accommodation plan. The steps for students are outlined below:

1. Complete the online application
2. Submit professional documentation of disability, and
3. Attend an Accommodation Planning meeting
4. Implementation of the Reasonable Accommodation (implementing certain services may require additional action or coordination).

### Do all students with disabilities have to register with Disability Services (DS)?

No, it is likely that many students with disabilities have chosen not to register with DS. Some do not need services or accommodations. If a student chooses not to register with DS, faculty do not need to provide an accommodation. If students wish to receive accommodations, they must register and follow the process for accommodations through DS.

### When is a student required to notify faculty of a request for accommodations?

A student can notify a faculty member of the need for accommodations by having Disability Services (DS) send a faculty notification letter at any time during the quarter. Faculty should provide accommodations from that point forward in the quarter. Accommodations are not expected to be applied retroactively.

### Will most students with disabilities (who are already aware of their disability) identify themselves to me at the beginning of the quarter?

Students who are registered with DS are strongly encouraged to meet with individual professors during office hours at the beginning of the quarter in order to discuss how their disability may impact the specific course. Some students choose not to identify themselves as students with disabilities. They may be in a stage of their disability identity development where disclosure is uncomfortable, or they may simply be in

the process of applying for accommodations and may find they are eligible for accommodations in the middle, or even at the end, of the quarter. As noted above, any student requesting classroom accommodations must make timely requests for appropriate accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive.

### **Who is responsible for determining appropriate accommodations?**

Disability Services is the designated office for determining reasonable accommodations through an interactive process with the student. The determination whether an accommodation is reasonable involves three primary elements:

- A review of professional documentation, containing clinical opinions and professional recommendations, to determine if a condition meets the standard established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of a substantial impairment of a major life activity;
- A determination of the functional impact of this condition on the student in an academic setting;
- Past history of accommodation.

Disability Services also considers the experiences and perspective of the student and the nature of the course or degree program. All requests for accommodation are considered on a case-by-case basis. Disability Services staff will consult with the course instructor when an accommodation is exceptional, or if it is apparent that an accommodation might constitute a fundamental alteration of the course or degree program.

### **Does the instructor have the right to know what type of disability a student has when the student asks for an accommodation?**

No. A faculty member generally does not have a need to know what the disability is, only that the disability has been appropriately verified by the office assigned this responsibility on behalf of the institution (at Seattle University, this is the DS office). Upon approval of a student's request for a reasonable accommodation, the university and the professor must accommodate the student.

### **What laws require reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities?**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act are federal laws designed to protect the rights of students with disabilities in educational programs and activities. As a federal funds recipient, Seattle University must comply with these laws and Department of Education regulations regarding students with disabilities.

### **Can faculty or staff choose not to provide reasonable accommodations?**

No. While the process of providing reasonable accommodations begins when the student makes a request to Disability Services, it is an instructor's responsibility to ensure that the learning environment is equitable and accessible.

### **Is the instructor required to lower the standard of a required assignment because the student has a disability?**

No. The standards should be the same for all students. But students with disabilities may exhibit their knowledge, production, and other course expectations differently than their non-disabled peers. For example, a student with a learning disability in writing may produce an essay exam by using a computer or

scribe rather than writing out an answer. The standard for the final work product would not change in response to this reasonable accommodation.

### **What should a faculty member do if it appears an accommodation will not work in the classroom or for a course?**

If you have received a faculty notification letter from Disability Services and believe that the accommodation may cause a fundamental alteration to your course or would cause an undue administrative burden, call DS immediately at (206) 296-5740.

### **Should I waive assignments & course requirements for students with disabilities?**

No. Students with disabilities should be held to the same standards as their non-disabled peers. Accommodations should not alter the course or program in any substantive manner.

### **What if a student asks for an accommodation that is not included in the letter from DS?**

If the student makes a request and the request is not something you would do for any other student in your course, please refer the student back to the DS office for consultation. It is not always possible to predict the specific interaction between a student's disability and a specific course requirement; as a result, it may be necessary to amend the accommodations. In consultation with instructor and student, DS will be able to advise you as to the best academic adaptation. As a matter of best practice and guidance from the federal government, faculty should not provide any accommodation that has not been approved by DS.

### **What if I suspect a student has a disability but the student does not provide me with a letter from DS?**

You should not assume a student has a disability nor should you ask if the student has a disability. You should encourage a student who you think is challenged or struggling in your class to utilize all campus resources including Learning Assistance Programs (LAP), DS, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), etc.

### **Do field experiences have to be accessible to students with disabilities?**

Yes. Equal access must be provided to all components of a class or program even if it is not a required element. This would include labs, field trips, transportation provided by Seattle University, clinical placements, and internships. Please consult with Disability Services as soon as possible if you have questions or concerns about this requirement.

### **Does Seattle University make accommodations for Pregnancy?**

Yes. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication by following the same procedures as any other student requesting accommodation. Common accommodations for pregnancy include a larger desk, elevator access, ability to make frequent trips to the restroom, attendance consideration for medical appointments, or student leave of absence.

# Recording and Other Assistive Technology

## Can a faculty member prevent a student from recording lectures?

No, not if Disabilities Services has approved the recording as an accommodation to provide meaningful access to the educational experience. According to the Department of Education regulations interpreting Section 504:

- Students with disabilities who are unable to take or read meaningful notes have the right to record class lectures only for personal study purposes.
- Lectures recorded for personal study may not be shared with other people without the consent of the lecturer.
- Information contained in the audio-recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published or quoted without the express consent of the lecturer and without giving proper identity and credit to the lecturer (students are informed of this each quarter by DS staff).

## Instructor's right to privacy/protect copyright

The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights FAQs further clarify that a faculty member may not object to an approved accommodation of recording lectures on copyright or privacy grounds (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>). Disability Services strives to ensure that an instructor's concern for privacy and/or protection of copyright is respected and addressed while still assuring the availability of accommodation for the student.

At Seattle University this is done through the adoption of an agreement between the Student and DS that limits the use of recordings. In the agreement the student agrees to not share any course recordings and acknowledges that the recordings are solely for their personal educational use.

## Classes involving self-disclosure from students

In some courses, portions of class sessions may involve self-disclosure of sensitive information from students. These portions of a class session may not be appropriate for recording as the use of a recording device may inhibit students from freely sharing. If these open discussions are not appropriate subject matter for any student to be taking notes, it would be appropriate to issue a general announcement to the class to request that students who are using a recording device turn it off and that other students stop taking notes (as the use of a recording device is to replace the student's note-taking ability).

An example would be to say "The note-taking portion of this class is over. Please turn off recorders/recording apps, and refrain from taking written or typed notes."

## The means of audio-recording

There are multiple ways for a student with disabilities to record a course material. DS loans smart-pens, digital recorders, and tablet/computer applications to students for the purpose of providing access. Typically, students for whom this accommodation is granted are those who have print disabilities, learning disabilities, or difficulties attending to the lecture content and making cogent written notes at the same time. The audio recording allows the student to "fill in the gaps" after the lecture or clarify meaning in their written notes.

## Do I have to allow students to use technology in my courses?

There are instances when a student with a disability will need to use various technologies during a class. These will be outlined in the Faculty Notification Letter. This may include, but is not limited to, a laptop to take notes, digital recording devices, and other types of technology as needed. Students sometimes use a software called Sonocent. To use this specific software students may use their phone, tablet, or laptop to record the lecture. Providing power points in advance is recommended to help the student best utilize the software.

## What if I have a policy specifically banning the use of laptops or recording?

If a laptop or course recording is an approved accommodation, a policy modification for the student with a disability is reasonable and necessary. In order not to publicly identify the student with a disability, instructors are encouraged to state on the syllabus something like the following: "Exceptions for the use of a laptop may be granted for compelling reasons at the discretion of the instructor."

## How should I notify students that lectures may be recorded?

DS recommends that you always include a statement in your syllabus that states: "Please be aware that this class may be audio recorded at times and all uses of said audio recording are limited to academic purposes for this class only." **It is very important that you *not* identify the DS student and the approved accommodation to other students.**

## Who do I contact for guidance?

<b>Front Desk:</b>	(206) 296-5740
<b>Testing Center:</b>	(206) 398-4378
<b>Accessible Media:</b>	(206) 398-4116

For general information (non-emergencies), contact: [DS@seattleu.edu](mailto:DS@seattleu.edu).  
Professors may send exams to: [testingcenter@seattleu.edu](mailto:testingcenter@seattleu.edu).

## Disability Services Staff

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