

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 27, 2019  
**TO:** Faculty/Instructors  
**FROM:** Tawny McManus, Assistant Vice Provost for Accessibility & Disability Services  
**RE:** ACCOMMODATIONS & SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Welcome to Spring semester from the Office of Accessibility & Disability Services!

This memo highlights information from Student Disability Services (SDS) to assist you in ensuring that students enrolled in your courses have equal opportunity for full participation, access and inclusion.

- I. **ACCOMMODATIONS:** Instructors will receive an emailed letter from SDS listing the required accommodation(s) if there is a student with a disability enrolled in the class.
  - a. If you have a TA or Co-instructor, please share the accommodation letter with them as only the instructor of record in PeopleSoft will receive an accommodation letter email from SDS.
  - b. If you have a student who reports a need for an accommodation due to disability but you **have not received a letter from SDS**, please refer the student to contact SDS. We do not advise providing accommodations if you have not received a current semester letter directly from SDS.
  - c. Students with disabilities have the right to register for and request disability services at any time throughout the year. Thus, accommodation letters may come to you at different times during a semester (despite students being encouraged to register with SDS prior to classes starting).
  - d. Students can choose not to use their approved accommodations, however, an instructor is not required to accommodate a student retroactively who did not request SDS accommodations.
  
- II. **TEST ADMINISTRATION:** SDS proctors tests for students with disabilities who are registered with the SDS office and approved for testing accommodations.
  - a. Departments/instructors can provide accommodated testing and not use SDS proctoring if the accommodation can be met appropriately. For example, providing students the approved amount of extended time in a quiet testing environment; not in a busy hallway.
  - b. SDS test proctoring on the UMBC Main Campus is on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays from 8:30 am -4:30 pm, and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 am -7:00 pm. Proctored testing at the USG campus is provided by their Center for Academic Success (CAS).
  - c. Tests proctored by SDS **require a testing instructions form** submitted via a secure **RT ticket**. Tests can be submitted via uploading attachments to the RT ticket, or can be dropped off in hard copy in SDS after you fill out the RT form. Completing the form online in the SDS office is also acceptable.  
 The RT ticket test submission web link is on our SDS website:  
<https://sds.umbc.edu/faculty-form-for-accommodated-test-submission-pink-form/>
  - d. Testing accommodations do not provide an unfair advantage to a student with a disability, but rather provide an opportunity for equal access given their limitations. For example, slowed processing speed can require extended test-taking time to allow the SDS student the opportunity to read and complete each question just like their peers can. If a student does not know an answer, sitting with a test longer will not help them.

- III. NOTE-TAKING ASSISTANCE:** Students with disabilities who have been approved for note-taking assistance are encouraged to use *Sonocent* audio note-taking software provided by SDS. Note-taking technologies record class lectures and allow for more active learning.
- a. Audio recording of lectures may be listed as an approved accommodation on the student’s letter from SDS to facilitate note-taking. The recording is only to be used for academic study and cannot be distributed elsewhere without instructor permission. An audio recording agreement approved by UMBC’s Office of General Counsel is available on our SDS [web page](#) under *Faculty Resources*.
  - b. If a student cannot use *Sonocent* for note-taking, we will solicit a [peer note-taker](#) from the class by emailing your class roster announcing a note-taker is needed for a student with a disability. We will provide instructions on how to apply for this stipend paid position. If a peer note-taker does not volunteer, we will ask faculty to assist by making an announcement to the class. Instructors can also provide their own notes.
  - c. Please note that SDS makes the note-taker assignments and student names are kept confidential. SDS requires the use of our *Accommodate* secure online data management system for uploading and tracking of notes. Peers who take notes but do not go through the hiring/payroll process in SDS are not eligible for the note-taking stipend. There is only 1 note-taker assigned per class, when one is needed.
- IV. ACCESSIBLE COURSE MATERIALS:** Accessibility is a shared and required campus responsibility and it benefits everyone! All course documents and videos should be in accessible formats, but it is required for students with sensory impairments such as blindness, low vision, and deafness.
- a. Faculty are advised to attend free trainings on campus provided throughout the year by SDS and the department of Instructional Technology. There are also many free online “how-to make your documents accessible” resources.
  - b. **Please use Blackboard Ally**, the accessibility tool within Blackboard provided by DoIT that can scan the course content you have uploaded or created and informs you if your materials are accessible.
  - c. Some examples of accessible course content include uploading PDFs that can be read by a screen reader and are not “image” or picture files, choosing captioned videos, and selecting digital textbooks. Also, be proactive and share reading lists in advance to facilitate SDS obtaining alternate format texts if needed.
  - d. Make sure you include [SDS’s contact info on your syllabus](#) for students and we strongly advise you run Microsoft Word’s accessibility checker tool on your syllabi and all self-created documents for accessibility.

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Thank you for assisting UMBC in providing access to all students and we look forward to working with you to help support the diverse learning needs of our SDS students. Remember, accommodations do not compromise academic standards but provide an alternative way of accomplishing course objectives by reducing disability-related barriers. Please do not hesitate to reach out to an SDS staff member when questions.

**Office of Student Disability Services (SDS), Math/Psychology Bldg. 212 • (410) 455-2459 [disABILITY@umbc.edu](mailto:disABILITY@umbc.edu) • [sds.umbc.edu](http://sds.umbc.edu)**