# MEMORANDUM

**DATE: September 15, 2022**

**TO: Faculty/Instructors**

**FROM: Tawny McManus, Asst Vice Provost for Accessibility & Disability Services, Director, Student Disability Services (SDS)**

**RE: WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES & SDS ACCOMMODATIONS**

**Happy Fall semester!**

This memo is sent out bi-annually to faculty to highlight important information to assist you in ensuring that students who have disabilities have equal opportunity for access, inclusion, and full participation in your courses.

It is supplemental to the more detailed “[Disability Accommodation Guidelines](https://sds.umbc.edu/accommodations/faculty/)” and resources found on our SDS website located under our “Information for Faculty” menu (<https://sds.umbc.edu/resources/information-for-faculty/> ), and the guide we created in *Blackboard* under the “Organizations” tab called “SDS Accommodation Support for Faculty”.

(If you have not yet been added to the Bb shell, please email our AD Michael Canale canale@umbc.edu with a “**Request to add to Blackboard**” subject heading).

1. **ACCOMMODATIONS:** Instructors will receive an emailed letter directly from SDS listing the approved ADA accommodation(s) if a student with a disability in is your class and has registered with the SDS office.
2. If you have a TA or Co-instructor, please share the accommodation letter with them.
3. If you have a student who reports needing disability accommodations, but you have NOT received a letter from SDS, please refer the student to contact the SDS office.
4. Note that accommodation letters may come to you throughout a semester. All students are informed about SDS at orientation, but students have the right to request disability support at any time during the year when they are faced with barriers. We send you student letters as they are requested.
5. Instructors are NOT required to accommodate students retroactively who did not officially request accommodations and did not have a letter sent from SDS.
6. Faculty cannot deny a student’s accommodation. Please reach out to SDS staff if there are concerns or questions. Staff will work collaboratively with faculty on reasonable access solutions for your course(s).
7. Students with COVID and temporary illness are not necessarily students with disabilities and may need to arrange alternative participation directly with their instructors.
8. Title IX accommodation letters (from OEI) are different than SDS accommodation letters, however students may be working with both offices for their access and support needs.
9. **TEST ADMINISTRATION:** Students must be registered and have approved SDS testing accommodations to test in the SDS office. Testing accommodations apply to F2F, hybrid, and online courses.
10. SDS proctors in-person quizzes, tests, and exams, and typically does not proctor exams for online courses.

[**Accommodated testing**](https://sds.umbc.edu/accommodated-testing/) **is available in SDS: MONDAY-FRIDAY 9 AM- 4 PM**, and **Tues/Wed until 6:30 PM.**

1. Testing accommodations (e.g., extended time) for online courses can be set through Blackboard tools. Students can be proctored online using the *Respondus Lockdown* browser.
2. Do-IT help resources: <https://doit.umbc.edu/itnm/academic-continuity/available-tools-resources/>
3. Instructors CAN provide testing accommodations themselves (not in SDS) if the accommodation is met appropriately, e.g., ensuring the correct amount of extended time is given, a quiet environment, etc...
4. Testing accommodations are supported by medical documentation on file in SDS. They do not provide an unfair advantage to students with disabilities. Accommodations allow students to demonstrate their knowledge alternatively given limitations or environmental barriers.
5. Please consider general accessibility challenges facing all students when testing online, such as poor internet connections that may negatively impact timed testing.
6. For Fall 2022, masks are required to be worn in the multi-student SDS testing rooms.
7. **NOTE-TAKING ASSISTANCE:** Students with disabilities who have this accommodation primarily use note-taking technologies and audio recording software.
8. SDS provides access to “Glean” note-taking technology to students who require this support. Taking notes in this manner increases active learning, engagement, and study with the course material versus just being shared a copy of a peer’s notes.
9. “Recording of lectures” may be listed on the accommodation letter, and an audio recording agreement approved by UMBC's Office of General Counsel is linked to the accommodation letter for faculty use if they would like. Students can be asked to stop recording during sensitive, personal sharing discussions.

 \**Recordings are only to be used for academic study and cannot be distributed elsewhere without instructor permission. Students may be subject to conduct sanctions if found in violation.\**

1. If a student cannot use technology and a peer notetaker is necessary, SDS will seek volunteers in the class and coordinate note delivery to our students through SDS’s online student portal “Accommodate”. Faculty do not make SDS notetaker assignments unless SDS requests assistance doing so.
2. Instructors CAN provide their own notes as an access solution.
3. Faculty concerns about audio recording as a required accommodation should be directed to SDS.

1. **ACCESSIBLE COURSE MATERIALS:** Accessibility is a shared campus responsibility, and it benefits all students when courses are planned with universal design and inclusion in mind. Plan ahead and save time later.
2. ALL course materials and videos must be provided in accessible formats (e.g., captioned videos regardless of whether a Deaf or hard of hearing student is in the class, readable PDF not images).
3. Faculty are advised to attend trainings offered through DO-IT, FDC, & SDS on best practices in hybrid teaching, universal design, and accessibility. [PIVOT](https://pivot.umbc.edu/) training is strongly recommended.
4. USE **Blackboard’s** [**Ally**](https://wiki.umbc.edu/display/faq/Ally) **tool**, which can scan your course content for accessibility challenges.
5. Run Microsoft Word’s “accessibility checker” on your syllabus and self-created documents.
6. Choose accessible PDFs and digital textbooks when possible, i.e., texts that can be read by screen readers, not image/picture files or old copies of photocopied documents. Check the library for digital articles and choose *Open Educational Resources* to adopt.
7. Record lectures and use [Panopto](https://doit.umbc.edu/itnm/academic-continuity/available-tools-resources/) tools or PowerPoints for auto-captioning. Host discussions/meetings in WebEx (or Google Meetings) to auto-caption and have transcripts made. Captions/transcripts support students with hearing limitations, noisy environments, note-taking needs, & ESL students inclusively.
8. **ATTENDANCE & ASSIGNMENT EXTENSION REQUESTS DUE TO DISABILITY COMPLICATIONS**
9. When disability-related absences occur, students are responsible for contacting the faculty member or SDS as soon as possible to arrange for make-up work or an alternative due date.
10. An accommodation for a make-up test or an assignment extension **is not an automatic extension on all coursework all semester,** but rather is to be applied when an *extenuating circumstance* arises from a student's disability. Communication between the student, faculty member, and SDS is essential.
11. Any offered or agreed upon new due dates, extensions, or alternative assignments should be documented in writing (email). Typical extensions are between 2-7 days, depending on circumstances.
12. Faculty should contact SDS staff if there are concerns about excessive absences or extension requests. Faculty should **not request** any disability documentation be sent to them regarding the absence.

Thank you for assisting UMBC in providing accessible courses to students. We look forward to working with you to support the diverse learning needs of our community. Do not hesitate to contact an SDS staff member with questions.

***Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) - (410) 455-2459 -*** ***disABILITY@umbc.edu*** ***-* SDS.UMBC.EDU**