MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 1, 2024 TO: Faculty/Instructors

FROM: Tawny McManus, Assistant Vice Provost for Accessibility & Disability Services RE: **WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES & ADA ACCOMMODATION FAQs**

Happy Spring semester!

This memo is sent out bi-annually to provide information that can assist you in ensuring that students with disabilities have equal opportunity for access and participation in your courses. Please join us in providing an inclusive educational environment to all students by providing accessible, universally designed courses.

**Faculty Resources:** You can self-enroll in our Faculty SDS guide in *Blackboard* under the “*Organizations*” tab.

* Weblink to *Blackboard “SDS Accommodations Support for Faculty*[*”*: https://tinyurl.com/SDSfacultysupport](https://tinyurl.com/SDSfacultysupport)
* Faculty can also access our online portal following instructions for the ***Accommodate* Faculty Module.** ►When you log into *Accommodate*, you can view the students with approved accommodations in your courses and also see whether students have scheduled tests for your courses in SDS.

We also provide detailed faculty resource information on our Student Disability Services (SDS) website under the “*Information for Faculty*” menu heading at <https://sds.umbc.edu/resources/information-for-faculty/>.

The SDS website answers many FAQs and also contains “Disability Accomm[odation Guidelines”](https://sds.umbc.edu/recommended-disability-statement-for-course-syllabi/) to assist you in supporting students. For example, we are often asked for a recommended syllabi statement and there is a sample ready for you to use right on the resource page!

SDS Staff hold *drop-in lunch sessions* throughout the semester and are also available to attend department meetings on request for training and discussion needs (in-person or virtually). THANK YOU to all the faculty that just attended our 1/26/24 session, "*I got an accommodation letter, so now what?*" The slides for this event will be posted to the resources page.

We also highly recommend attending the various campus trainings offered by our campus partners on inclusive teaching practices, universal design for learning, and creating accessible course content to best welcome and be prepared for students of all abilities and learning styles. Follow the *MyUMBC* pages for event announcements.

**FAQ TOPICS:**

1. **ACCOMMODATIONS:** Instructors will receive an emailed letter directly from SDS listing the required ADA accommodation(s) if a student with a disability is in your class, has registered with SDS, and requested letters be sent to their faculty.
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. Accommodation letters may come to you throughout a semester. All students are informed about SDS on admission, but they have a right to request disability accommodations at any time in the academic year or on their academic journey; there is no deadline date.
5. Instructors are NOT required to accommodate students retroactively who did not request SDS accommodations nor have a letter sent from SDS. However, consideration of a student's

reported challenges is encouraged, and reasonable flexibility may be advised.

1. Faculty *cannot deny* or alter a student’s ADA accommodations. Reach out to SDS staff if there are concerns and we will work collaboratively with you on reasonable access solutions.
2. Students who have *COVID* and other brief, temporary illnesses (e.g., flu) are not typically considered students with disabilities. They will need to arrange make-up work directly with faculty.
3. Advising: If a student informs you they require a [course substitution due to a disability](https://sds.umbc.edu/course-substitution-requests/), refer them to SDS. SDS-approved substitutions for Math or L201 GEP requirements will be noted in Peoplesoft.

1. **SDS TEST PROCTORING:** SDS students must have testing accommodations approved on their letter if they are to receive accommodated testing. SDS does not have a general testing center for all UMBC students to take tests/quizzes or make-up exams; only registered SDS students test in SDS offices.
   1. SDS proctoring for in-person exams requires students to schedule appointments **4 days** in advance. SDS does NOT proctor exams for online courses unless a specialized need exists.

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

* 1. Testing accommodations like extended time can be set up online through Blackboard tools if the test is given online. Do-IT tools such as *Respondus Lockdown* browser are also useful for proctoring online testing. [Do-IT help resources link.](https://doit.umbc.edu/itnm/academic-continuity/available-tools-resources/)
  2. Instructors/TAs CAN provide testing accommodations themselves in their classrooms/offices or through online tools if the ADA accommodation can be met (e.g., ensuring the correct amount of extended time is provided or a limited distraction test environment).
  3. 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 environmental barriers.*
     + For example, consider if a student takes a test they have not studied for. Sitting with a test for 1 hour versus 3 hours does not make them more likely to pass if they do not know the content. More time will, however, allow them to attempt every question if they may read or process information slower than their neurotypical peers.

1. **NOTE-TAKING ASSISTANCE:** Students with disabilities who have this accommodation primarily use note-taking technologies and audio recording software to assist them.
   1. SDS provides access to note-taking technologies to students who require this support using *Glean*

recording software. Taking notes in this manner increases active learning with course content.

* 1. “Recording of lectures” may be listed on the accommodation letter to facilitate this. An audio recording agreement approved by UMBC's Office of General Counsel is linked to the accommodation letter for faculty to use with students if it is desired.

\*\*“*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 in violation.”*

* 1. If a student cannot use technology and peer notetaker support becomes necessary, SDS will seek volunteers in the class and coordinate note delivery through SDS’s online student portal. Faculty do not make SDS notetaker assignments unless SDS requests their assistance.
  2. Instructors CAN provide their personal course notes as an access solution for student support.
  3. Faculty concerns about audio recording as a required accommodation should be directed to SDS. Students can be asked not to recordsensitive discussions where personal disclosure is likely.

1. **ACCESSIBLE COURSE MATERIALS:** Accessibility is a shared campus responsibility. It benefits all students when courses are planned with universal design and inclusion in mind; be proactive.
   1. 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 a class, readable PDFs- not images).
   2. 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.
   3. USE *Blackboard*’s [Ally](https://wiki.umbc.edu/display/faq/Ally) tool, which scans and scores your course content for accessibility feedback.
   4. Run *Microsoft Word’s* “Accessibility Checker” on your self-created documents to correct errors.
   5. Choose accessible PDFs and digital textbooks, meaning texts that can be read by screen readers, not image/picture files or old copies of photocopied articles.

-Check the library for digital articles and choose Open Educational Resources when possible. Reference librarians can assist you in identifying these.

* 1. Record lectures and use [Panopto](https://doit.umbc.edu/itnm/academic-continuity/available-tools-resources/) tools for auto-captioning. Host discussions/meetings in *Google* *Meets* or *WebEx* that have auto-captioning and transcripts available.
  2. *Why record?* Captions/transcripts can support all students in their learning, not just those with hearing disabilities. They support learning in students with note-taking challenges, auditory processing and attentional difficulties, English as a second language (ESL) learners, returning adult students, those who struggle in noisy or poor acoustic environments, and many others.

1. **ATTENDANCE & ASSIGNMENT EXTENSION REQUESTS DUE TO DISABILITY COMPLICATIONS**
   1. When disability-related absences occur, students are responsible for contacting the faculty member and/or SDS as soon as possible, typically in advance, to arrange for make-up work.
   2. An accommodation for a make-up test or an assignment extension is NOT an automatic extension on all coursework all semester. It is to be applied when an extenuating circumstance arises from a student's disability and communication between student, faculty member, and SDS is essential.
   3. Any offered or agreed upon new due dates, extensions, or alternative assignments should be documented in writing (email). Typical extensions are 24-48 hours, but it could be 7-14 days, depending on the specific health circumstances and type of assignment or project due.
   4. Faculty should contact SDS staff if there are concerns about excessive absences and many extension requests related to their disability/health condition to discuss possible solutions.
   5. Faculty should NOT request any detailed disability information or documentation be sent to them; this is confidential and maintained securely in SDS.

Thank you for assisting UMBC in providing an accessible education to our increasingly diverse and uniquely talented student population. Do not hesitate to contact SDS staff when questions arise. We look forward to working with you!

*\*Note: If you are an employee with questions about work-related accommodations due to a health condition, information can be found on the* [*Accessibility & Disability Services webpage*](https://accessibility.umbc.edu/employee-accommodations/requesting-work-related-accommodations-at-umbc-procedures/) *under the “employees” menu heading.*

*ACCESSIBILITY & DISABILITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT*

*Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) – Division of Academic Affairs*

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[SDS.UMBC.EDU](https://sds.umbc.edu/)