

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 28, 2026

TO: Faculty/Instructors

FROM: Tawny L. McManus, Assistant Vice President, Disability Access & Resources
Division of Institutional Equity (DoIE)

RE: WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES & ADA ACCOMMODATION FAQs

Happy Fall Semester!

This memo is sent annually to provide information that supports faculty in ensuring students with disabilities have an equitable and inclusive learning opportunity in your courses.

Hot off the press announcement...we have a new name: **Office of Disability Access & Resources!**

This name better reflects our focus on creating access solutions when barriers to participation exist for individuals with disabilities on our campus, and our commitment to being a resource partner. Please join us in providing an accessible and welcoming educational environment for all!

Faculty Resources:

- A. Faculty resource information is available on our website under the [Information for Faculty](#) menu heading.
The website answers many FAQs and includes "[Disability Accommodation Guidelines](#)" to help you implement student accommodations.
- B. Self-service support: [Faculty Blackboard Module](#) and the [Accommodate Faculty Module](#)
 - a. Please **self-enroll** in the *Blackboard* Module under the "*Organizations*" tab.
 - i. Access the module at [SDS Faculty Support Blackboard Link](#).
 - ii. The module contains up-to-date information, instructions, and resources.
 - b. Access our **Accommodate Faculty Module** via our online data management system.
 - i. This online portal shows all students with accommodations enrolled in your classes and sections. It will also display their approved accommodation list.
 - ii. Please [log into Accommodate](#) to view whether your students have scheduled tests in the Disability Testing Center.
- C. Join us for a *drop-in brown bag lunch-and-learn session!*
 - a. Thank you to all who attended our "*You Got An Accommodation Letter...now what*" session for faculty last week (if you missed it, a recording is available on Blackboard).
 - b. We also host monthly drop-in Q&A sessions on a variety of topics with our Assistive

- Technology & Digital Accessibility Specialist in our Math/Psych conference room.
- c. We participate throughout the semester in collaborative training sessions with DoIT, HR, Career Services, and other campus partners highlighting accessible practices.
 - i. →Follow our [MyUMBC page](#) for event notifications.
 - ii. We also highly recommend attending training sessions by campus partners on inclusive teaching practices, universal design for learning, and creating accessible course content.

D. Invite us to attend department/staff meetings for individualized *ADA training* and discussion.

FACULTY FAQS: “I got an accommodation letter, now what?”

I. ACCOMMODATIONS:

Instructors will receive an emailed letter directly from the disability office listing the required ADA accommodation(s) if a student with a disability is in your class, is registered with the office, and has requested letters be sent. Letters will be for the current semester only.

- a. If you have a TA or Co-instructor (who is not listed in the course schedule), please share the accommodation letter with them.
- b. If a student reports needing a disability accommodation but you have NOT received an official letter, please refer the student to our office.
- c. Accommodation letters arrive throughout a semester/year; there is no deadline/due date. All students are informed about disability services at admission and orientation, but they have the right to request disability accommodations at any time in their academic journey. Life circumstances change.
- d. Instructors are NOT required to accommodate students retroactively who did not request accommodations or did not have a letter sent. However, we encourage you to consider a student's reported challenges and may advise flexibility.
- e. Faculty ***cannot deny*** or alter a student's ADA accommodations. Reach out to our staff with concerns, and we will work collaboratively with you to find solutions.
- f. Students with brief, temporary illnesses (e.g., flu) are not typically considered students with disabilities. They will need to arrange make-up work directly with you.
- g. Course Advising: If a student informs you they require a [course substitution due to a disability](#), refer them to our office. If granted, disability-based approved substitutions for Math or L201 GEP requirements will be documented in PeopleSoft for you.

II. ACCOMMODATED TEST PROCTORING: Students must have a testing accommodation on their letter to receive proctored testing in the testing center. Only registered students with disabilities can schedule and test with the disability office.

- a. Please read the accompanying Faculty Testing Memo for testing procedures.
- b. [Accommodated testing](#) hours:
Monday - Friday 9 AM- 4 PM (Tues/Wed extended hours until 6 PM)
- c. Proctored testing occurs on the 2nd floor of **Math/Psych** & in **UC 114 Test Center**.
- d. We do NOT proctor exams for online courses unless a specialized need exists.

Extended-time test accommodations can be set up online through *Blackboard* tools when tests are online. Do-IT tools, such as the *Respondus LockDown Browser*, are also useful for proctoring online testing and are recommended.

- e. Instructors CAN provide testing accommodations in their classrooms or online if the ADA accommodation can be met (e.g., providing accurate extended time, a reduced-distraction test environment, allowing breaks, etc.).
- f. Testing accommodations are supported by medical documentation on file in SDS. They do not provide an unfair advantage to students with disabilities.

Ex: If a student takes a test they have not studied for, sitting with it for 1 hour versus 3 hours does not make them more likely to pass it if they do not know the content. However, more time may allow them to attempt every question if they read and process information slower than their non-disabled peers.

NOTE-TAKING ASSISTANCE: Students with disabilities with this accommodation primarily use note-taking technologies and audio recording software to take notes.

- a. We provide note-taking technology to students who *require* this support and are newly using *Jamworks* audio recording and transcription software for 2026.
- b. *Jamworks* is approved by the State of Maryland for note-taking accommodations.
- c. “*Recording of lectures*” will be listed on the accommodation letter.
- d. An audio recording agreement approved by UMBC's Office of General Counsel is linked to the accommodation letter for faculty noting that:
***“*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.*”
*Students can be asked *not to record sensitive discussions* where personal disclosure is likely.
- e. If a student cannot use technology and *needs peer notetaker* support, **we will seek volunteers in the class** and coordinate note delivery through our student portal, Accommodate. Faculty do not make notetaker assignments.
- f. Instructors CAN provide their personal course notes as an access solution.
- g. Direct faculty concerns about audio recording as a required accommodation to disability staff for consultation.

- III. **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 by creating accessible courses!

- a. ALL course materials and videos must be in accessible formats (e.g., captioned videos, regardless of whether a Deaf or hard-of-hearing student is in the class, and readable PDF files).
- b. Faculty should attend training offered through Do-IT & FDC on best practices in inclusive teaching, universal design, and creating accessible course materials.
 - [Digital Accessibility resources](#) are also available online.
- c. TIP: Use *Blackboard's Ally* tool to scan and score your course content for accessibility.
- d. Run *Microsoft Word's "Accessibility Checker"* on your self-created documents.
- e. **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. UMBC reference librarians can help you identify these.
- f. Record lectures and use Do-IT tools for auto-captioning. Host discussions/meetings in *Google Meet* or *WebEx* that have auto-captioning and transcription available.
- g. *Why record?* Captions/transcripts support all students, not just those with hearing disabilities. Captions support learning for students with note-taking challenges, auditory processing or attentional difficulties, English as a second language (ESL) learners, those who struggle in noisy or poor acoustic environments, and many others.

IV. ATTENDANCE AND ASSIGNMENT EXTENSION REQUESTS (DUE TO DISABILITY COMPLICATIONS)

- a. When disability-related absences occur, students must contact the faculty member as soon as possible, ideally in advance, to arrange make-up work.
- b. An accommodation for a make-up test or an assignment extension is NOT an automatic extension on all coursework for the entire semester. It is applied when an extenuating circumstance arises from a student's disability; e.g., a chronic health flare.
- c. Any offered or agreed-upon new due dates, extensions, or alternative assignments should be documented in writing (email to the student and disability@umbc.edu).
- d. Typical extensions are 24-48 hours, but they may be a week or more, depending on the specific health circumstances encountered. Referrals can be made to the Academic Success Center for a success planning meeting if a student is significantly behind in their work.
- e. Faculty can contact disability staff if they have concerns about excessive absences or multiple extension requests related to disability/health condition challenges to discuss solutions.
- f. Faculty should NOT request disability information be sent to them; this is confidential and maintained securely in the disability office.
- g. Recognize that health challenges are not black and white, and no single solution fits all. Empathic listening and flexibility are recommended, but you are not being asked to lower performance standards or alter fundamental course objectives.

Thank you for helping UMBC provide an inclusive educational environment to our students. Please contact our staff when you have questions. We look forward to working with you!

Note: If you are an **employee seeking work-related accommodations due to a health condition, information is on the [Disability Access & Resources accessibility webpage](#) under the "Employees" menu heading.*

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