

# **GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE & REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**



**CHIPOLA COLLEGE  
OFFICE FOR STUDENTS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Alternative Format**

For persons with print-related disabilities, this publication is available in alternative format. For more information, contact the Advisor for Students with Disabilities in the Student Services Building at (850) 718-2451.

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## **Introduction**

This *Guide* has these fundamental goals: heighten awareness, provide basic information and acquaint readers with the campus and community resources available to assist them in working with students who have disabilities. The means of achieving these goals are often not merely matters of judgment. They are matters of knowledge and sensitivities that most of us simply do not have because of lack of experience in teaching students with disabilities.

The obligation to accommodate students with disabilities extends beyond the moral responsibility and beyond our commitment to fulfill the promise of access.

President George H. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law on July 26, 1990. This law reinforces the concept of reasonable accommodations in education and mandates greater access to employment, transportation and public accommodations.

There is a legal imperative, which is embodied in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, often referred to as the “Civil Rights Act” for people with disabilities. It states, in part:

*No otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*

In order to comply with this mandate, community colleges that receive federal assistance must assure that the same educational programs and services offered to other students be available to students with disabilities.

To accomplish this goal, both physical and programmatic access must be provided. This means more than the removal of architectural barriers and the provision of auxiliary services. It means that reasonable accommodations must be made in the instructional process to ensure full educational opportunity. This principle applies to all teaching strategies as well as to institutional and departmental policies.

### **Background for classroom accommodation**

The concept of classroom accommodations for students with disabilities is not new. As a result of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students have been requesting and receiving classroom accommodations for years. However, the ADA has brought more attention to accommodating the needs of individuals with disabilities. As a direct result of the passage of the ADA, the numbers of students who have identified themselves as having disabilities have increased markedly. Why the increase? Thanks to education, people with disabilities are becoming aware of their rights and more inclined to be assertive when requesting accommodations.

### **Procedures for providing accommodations**

In order to assist faculty and students, Chipola College has established procedures for requesting accommodations based on disability:

1. Any student requesting services as a result of a disability should be referred to the Advisor for Students with Disabilities, herein referred to as the “Advisor.”
2. Once referred, the Advisor will work with that student to arrange for appropriate accommodations.
3. Once the accommodations have been decided upon, that student should make an appointment with each instructor and provide a letter from the Advisor detailing the identified accommodations.
4. Upon receipt of the letter, if there are any questions, a call should be placed to the Advisor. The process is designed to minimize the impact upon faculty members, while providing the necessary accommodations for the student.

### **Documenting disabilities**

All students with disabilities, whether visible or hidden, are required to provide appropriate documentation of that disability to the Advisor. *At no time is a student required to provide documentation to any other administrator, dean or instructor.* Verification of a disability may be provided by contacting the Advisor. Due to the sensitive nature of some disabilities and the right to privacy, the specific disability will not be mentioned in the letter of accommodation. It is only necessary to know that the Advisor has a record of the disability and has approved the student for specific accommodations. The letter serves as the student's documentation that he/she is an eligible student with a disability and therefore entitled to effective and reasonable accommodation.

### **Faculty responsibility**

If at any time there are questions about any student with a disability in your class, you are encouraged to discuss your questions with the Advisor.

## **Responsibility to Provide Effective Classroom Accommodations**

### **Faculty Responsibility**

Faculty members are usually the first to know that a student with a disability is in class. Students with disabilities are not required to register with an agency on campus. However, when requesting specific classroom accommodations as a result of a disability, they are required to register with the Office for Students with Disabilities.

It is at the point of any initial request by a student, that the student should be referred to the Office for Students with Disabilities. The Advisor encourages all faculty to work with any student, whatever the situation. However, it is ultimately better for all parties that a student with

a disability be referred to the proper person for support. Once referred, the process of determining whether the student meets state and federal guidelines for a specific disability can be determined. That determination is made only by the Advisor, the only individual designated to keep records of a student's disability. Once documentation is provided, the student is officially registered as having a disability and letters of accommodation can then be provided. The letter of accommodation that a student provides is the letter of record verifying that the student is registered as a student with a disability.

Upon receipt of the letter, each faculty member is responsible for reviewing the information in the letter. At any point that faculty members have questions or concerns about the information contained in the letter, they should immediately contact the Advisor to discuss the question or concern. All questions are to be directed to the Advisor and not the student. Until the Advisor is contacted, it can only be assumed that there are no questions with any particular student's accommodation package.

Reasonable accommodation in the classroom is an individual civil right guaranteed by federal legislation (ADA and Section 504). Once the accommodations are identified, the accommodation must be provided. The only option is how the accommodation will be provided. Most classroom accommodations are easy to arrange and will not take much time to administer. If, however, assistance is needed, contact the Office for Students with Disabilities. The Advisor will make the accommodation process simple and effective for both student and staff.

The issue of fairness and classroom accommodation is raised often. Classroom accommodations provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to compete on equal terms with other students in class. Individual accommodations are a civil right guaranteed under federal law. The accommodations prescribed through the Office for Students with Disabilities are not frivolous or arbitrary. They are individually designed for each student based on appropriate documentation on file in the Advisor's office. Although accommodations may appear similar for many students, they are based on individualized need and disability documentation.

Accommodations necessary for ensuring complete access to and full participation in the educational process do not require the instructor to adjust evaluations of academic performance. Rather, the accommodations make it possible for a student with a disability to truly learn the material presented and for an instructor to fairly evaluate the student's understanding of the material. Examples of accommodations are:

- < Priority seating in the classroom
- < Faculty member standing facing the class when speaking
- < Tape recording of lectures
- < Use of sign language interpreters
- < Providing copies of overhead demonstrations and lecture notes
- < Enlarged print on exam questions or lecture notes
- < Use of computers in taking tests
- < Providing alternative access to material covered in a field trip
- < Extra time on tests, exams, and quizzes
- < Change of classroom
- < Assistance in identifying tutors and note takers
- < Use of scribes
- < Exam delays
- < Reduced course load

- < Readers
- < Alternative test formats
- < Advanced copy of syllabus
- < Flexible attendance policies
- < Tape-recording exam answers

### **Failure to Accommodate**

Though rare, there have been incidents in which faculty refuse to provide the accommodations outlined in the accommodation memorandum. The accommodations outlined by the Advisor are not optional and must be provided under two federal pieces of legislation (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504; and the ADA). When questions arise, as to a specific accommodation, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to contact the Advisor to discuss the questions.

### **Student Responsibility**

Students with disabilities are responsible for ensuring that Chipola is aware of disabilities requiring accommodations in the education process. Students with disabilities should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities, as it is the only designated campus agency responsible for classroom accommodations.

Faculty members are encouraged to work with all students, but when accommodating students with disabilities, all faculty members are encouraged to refer students to the Office for Students with Disabilities in the Student Services Building.

After providing appropriate documentation of the disability requiring accommodation and consulting with the Advisor, the student is then registered. When registration is complete, the student should contact faculty members early in each semester and provide a memorandum from the Office for Students with Disabilities informing faculty members of necessary specific adaptations. Finally, students are responsible for requesting accommodations in a timely manner so instructors may plan for those accommodations.

Students with disabilities must maintain the same responsibility for their education as students who are non-disabled. This includes achieving the same academic standards, attending class, maintaining appropriate behavior and providing timely notification of individual needs.

Students who want to request classroom accommodations should register with the Office for Students with Disabilities and:

- < Meet with the Advisor to identify appropriate classroom accommodations
- < Request faculty contact memorandum
- < Deliver the memorandum to each individual instructor
- < Request memorandum update each semester
- < Notify the Advisor that faculty have been informed of accommodations

## **Dispelling Myths**

The similarities of students with disabilities and other students are more significant than their differences. The first step in teaching students with disabilities is easy: **treat them as you would all students**. After all, they come to college for the same reasons others do and they bring with them the same range of backgrounds, intelligence and scholastic skills. These truths are easier stated than acted upon. The best of intentions may be derailed by attitudes that dramatically distort our interaction with people who have disabilities.

Attitudes that distort our relationships with people who have disabilities may occur without malice, and are often the result of fears, guilt or inexperience with individuals who have disabilities. Distorting attitudes can be devastating to persons with disabilities. Unfounded or inappropriate attitudes reduce or bias our expectations of individual performance.

Defining a person by the disability, not by the person's humanness, leads us to isolate and segregate people with disabilities. It also hurts their pride and damages their confidence. Unfounded or inappropriate attitudes can be more disabling than any diagnosed disability.

Stereotyping prevails on a college campus, as it does in the larger society. In college, though, it not only perpetuates the prejudicial treatment encountered by people with disabilities elsewhere, but it may undermine scholastic performance or access to educational opportunities. Stereotyping also reinforces barriers that students with disabilities are trying to overcome at critical junctures in their lives.

**Revising our perceptions and attitudes is the first step in accommodating students with disabilities.** It is vital to remember that similarities among all students are much more significant than their differences: they are all, first and foremost, students.

## **Preferred Language**

People with disabilities prefer that you focus on their individuality, not their disability. The term “handicapped” has fallen into disuse and should be avoided. The terms “able-bodied”, “physically challenged” and “differently abled” are also discouraged. The following are some recommendations:

**Never use the article THE with an adjective to describe people with disabilities.**

The preferred usage, “people with disabilities” stresses the essential humanity of individuals and avoids objectification. Alternatively, the term “disabled people” is acceptable, but note that this term still defines individuals as disabled first, and people second.

**Not**    the deaf

**Use**    people who are deaf

**Not** the visually impaired  
**Use** people who are visually impaired

**Not** the disabled  
**Use** people with disabilities

If it is appropriate to refer to a person's disability, choose the correct terminology for the specific disability.

### **Appropriate Terminology**

The following terms are examples of appropriate terms to describe people with disabilities.

People who are blind; visually impaired; deaf; hard of hearing; mentally retarded; non-disabled; physically disabled. People with or who have Cerebral Palsy; Downs Syndrome; mental illness; paraplegia; quadriplegia; partial hearing loss; seizure disorder; specific learning disability; speech impairment.

**Be careful not to imply that people with disabilities are to be pitied, feared or ignored, or that they are somehow more heroic, courageous, patient or “special” than others. Never use the term “normal” in contrast.**

**Not** Beth held her own while swimming with normal children.

**Use** Beth qualified for her “Swimmer” certificate.

A person in a wheelchair is a “wheelchair user” or “uses a wheelchair.” Avoid terms that define the disability as a limitation such as “confined to a wheelchair” or “wheelchair-bound.” A wheelchair liberates; it doesn’t confine.

**Never use the terms “victim” or “sufferer” to refer to a person who has had a disease or disability. This term dehumanizes the person and emphasizes powerlessness.**

**Not** victim of AIDS or AIDS sufferer  
**Use** person with HIV/AIDS

**Not** polio victim  
**Use** had polio

(From Campus Guidelines for Using Inclusive Language and Illustrations in University Publications - University of Maryland at College Park).

## **Where to Go for Help**

The Office for Students with Disabilities provides students and faculty with information and support regarding students with disabilities. Also, assistance is available for meeting the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

A major concern of the college is assisting students in making any adjustments necessary for success in their academic careers. The Advisor assists any students who self-identify as having disabilities. Official documentation of disability is required to determine eligibility for aids or adaptations that may be helpful on campus.

The Advisor serves as full-time advocate for students with disabilities. The Advisor's role is to ensure that students have physical and programmatic access to all college programs, thereby enhancing their interactions in all activities of the campus community.

Faculty members are encouraged to ask students about their needs but not about specifics of their disability. The Office for Students with Disabilities also may render invaluable advisory services. The Advisor should be consulted about adaptations for students with disabilities and can also answer whatever questions may arise in accommodating the needs of students in the classroom.

### **Services Provided by the Office for Students with Disabilities**

- < Pre-admission counseling
- < Academic advisement
- < Special arrangements when needed (room changes, readers, interpreters, note takers, tutors and proctors)
- < Letters of classroom accommodation
- < Individually prescribed accommodations.

## **Overview**

Specific suggestions for teaching students with disabilities are offered in the sections devoted to each disability. Here are some general considerations to keep in mind.

### **Faculty-Student Responsibilities**

To the extent manageable, students with disabilities bear the primary responsibility of notifying the college of their disabilities. If a student needs an approved accommodation, faculty members are responsible for making those accommodations.

## **Faculty-Student Relationships**

Dialogue between the student and instructor is essential early in the term, and follow-up meetings are recommended. Faculty should not feel apprehensive about discussing a student's needs as they relate to the course. There is no reason to avoid using terms that refer to the disability, such as "blind," "see" or "walk." However, care should be taken to avoid generalizing a particular limitation to other aspects of a student's functioning. Often, for example, people in wheelchairs are spoken to loudly, as if they were deaf. The student will probably have had some experience with the kind of initial uneasiness you may bring to the relationship. The student's own suggestions, based on experience with the disability and with school work, are invaluable in accommodating disabilities in college.

## **Attendance and Promptness**

Flexible attendance policies are appropriate accommodations for some students. Students using wheelchairs or other assisting devices may encounter obstacles or barriers in getting to class on time. Others may have periodic or irregular difficulties, either from their disability or from medication. Flexibility in applying attendance and promptness rules to such students is helpful.

## **Classroom Adjustments**

A wide range of students with disabilities may be assisted in the classroom by the following: making book lists available prior to the beginning of the term, making appropriate seating arrangements, speaking only when directly facing the class and writing key lecture points and assignments on the chalkboard or an overhead projector. Remember that beards and mustaches that cover the mouth often interfere with a student's ability to speech read.

## **Alternative to Taking Notes**

Students who cannot take notes or have difficulty taking notes adequately use any combination of classroom accommodations such as tape-recording lectures, note-taker, copies of lecture notes and/or overheads, or they may just borrow classmates' notes. Students must ask permission of the instructor to tape-record a class. If taping a class is the only reasonable accommodation, the instructor must give permission for the student to tape the class.

## **Testing and Evaluation**

Depending on the disability, the student may require oral administration of examinations, use of readers and/or scribes, extensions of time for the duration of exams, modification of test formats or, in some cases, make-up exams. This may entail recognizing when a student has missed material (particularly in the case of those students with hearing and/or vision impairments) because the material was not interpreted literally or visual aids were not effectively described. If a student has missed or misunderstood the material because of these problems, test answers will demonstrate the incomplete knowledge. For out-of-class assignments, extension of deadlines may be justified. The objective of such considerations should always be to accommodate the student's learning differences, not to water down scholastic requirements.

Instructors should apply the same standards to students with disabilities as they apply to other students in evaluating their work and assigning grades.

### **Functional Problems**

In addition to the adjustments discussed in detail for each category of disability, some understanding is required in working with subtler and sometimes unexpected manifestations of a disability. Chronic weakness and fatigue characterize some disabilities and medical conditions. Drowsiness, fatigue, or impairments of memory or speech may result from prescribed medications. Such difficulties and interferences with the student's ability to perform should be distinguished from the apathetic behavior it may resemble.

### **Program Accessibility**

All events that are part of structured class activities are to be planned in accessible places. Workshops, labs, off-campus events, meetings, trips, conferences and any other program, service or activity must be open and accessible to all students. On an old campus, such as Chipola College, not all areas are accessible. Equal access may be achieved by moving the program, service or activity to an area that is accessible. We cannot renovate all areas, but we can ensure program access by moving the program. When planning events, on and off campus, please make sure that all individuals have access. If your office is not accessible, it is expected that you will make alternate arrangements to meet with students.

### **Syllabus Information**

One of the most crucial parts of any class is the syllabus. It is in the syllabus that instructor expectations are made known to each student. Students who are blind, visually impaired or learning disabled may not be able to access the syllabus in the traditional format. **A good way to correct for a possible problem is to include a statement on all future syllabi that notifies each student that the syllabus is available in alternate format upon request.** In most cases you will only need to enlarge the syllabus or change the font size when printing. If the larger font size is used, ask the student if a font size of 14 or 18 would be appropriate. If changing the font size is not possible, then enlarge each page on a copy machine, by changing from 8.5 x 11 to 11 x 17 to 144%.

The Office for Students with Disabilities is always trying to reach out to students with disabilities and inform them of the services available. You can help in that mission by adding the following sentence to each syllabus produced for your class. **For students with disabilities - to request classroom accommodations, contact the Advisor in the Student Services Building, by calling (850) 718-2451; 1(800) 955-8770 (voice); or 1(800) 955-8771 (TDD).**

### **Assistive Listening Devices**

An assistive listening device is a portable FM transmitter and receiver. Both receiver and transmitter are small enough to fit in a shirt pocket. Students who qualify will have an assistive listening device signed out to them while they are students at Chipola.

Students who are hard of hearing may at times have difficulty hearing what is said during class lectures and discussion periods. The college is responsible for providing assistive listening devices. However, students who are hard of hearing may not know that assistive listening devices are available. If you become aware that a student cannot hear what is being said, inform the student that assistance is available through the Office for Students with Disabilities.

### **Alternative Print**

Any publication that describes services, programs or activities (e.g. brochures, handouts, position announcements, pamphlets, resource guides, handbooks, catalogs, course schedule, applications, etc.) needs to include the following statement regarding availability in accessible formats:

1. *Upon request, for persons with print-related disabilities, this publication is available in alternate formats. For more information, please contact (insert name) at (phone number).*

If you have a document such as the College Catalog that you would like to offer in one particular format, the following is an example of what the statement would look like:

2. *Upon request, the college catalog is available on computer disk to persons with print-oriented disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of Admissions & Records.*

When selecting one type of format over another, you need to be aware that the person requesting the alternate format should be given primary consideration as to the format of the publication. Obviously, a computer disk would not be any good to someone who does not have a computer. You should always offer at least two format options.

Generally speaking, the first should be large-print copy and the second should be worked out between both parties.

**The program producing the publication is responsible for the costs associated with any alternate format publication.** The “upon request” portion of the statement is important. It is only upon request that alternate formats are provided. You are not required to stockpile any document; however, it is wise to be prepared and ready to act when and if a request is made. Providing alternate formatted documents is easier than it may sound. The most common request is for large-print copies. Large print can be supplied in two ways. If you have the text on computer, select an 18-point font and print a copy, or enlarge the document on a photo copy machine. For further assistance, contact the Advisor.

### **Telecommunication Device for the Deaf**

Any time you list a telephone number within a letter, booklet, pamphlet, resource guide, program announcement, application, notice, advertisement, letterhead and in any other circumstance where you provide a number to be reached, you should be sensitive to the fact that there are individuals who may not be able to call the phone number listed due to one of many disabilities (deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired). In this case you need to provide either a

corresponding TDD number, appropriate email address, or provide information on how to get in touch with you. As a result of the ADA, Florida and all other states now have third-party agencies that will act as the intermediary between the person with a disability and the non-disabled person. In Florida that agency is the Florida Relay Service (FRS). Use the relay number if no TDD number is available [FRS 1-800-955-8771 (TDD)].

Example statements for a publication that lists more than one office, department or college number:

*For individuals with hearing impairments, deaf or speech impairments, when trying to contact an office that does not list a TDD number, contact the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).*

*For a department publication with just that department number: For persons with speech and hearing impairments using TDD phone access, contact the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).*

## **Categories of Disabilities**

In order to provide services to students with disabilities, Chipola asks for voluntary self-identification of students with a specific disability. This information is kept confidential and is used for the purpose of aiding students in achieving their fullest potential while at the college. In addition, Chipola is required to submit annually a confidential report to the Division of Community Colleges that includes the number of students with disabilities by disability category.

### **Defining Disability**

To be considered disabled under either ADA or 504, a person must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a “major life activity,” has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Each student requesting classroom accommodations must present the appropriate documentation to the Advisor.

Listed below are the six categories of disabilities as outlined by the State of Florida.

### **Visual Disability**

Disorders in the structure and function of the eye as manifested by at least one of the following: (1) visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after the best possible correction, (2) a peripheral field so constricted that it affects one's ability to function in an educational setting, (3) a progressive loss of vision that may affect one's ability to function in an educational setting. Examples include, but are not limited to, cataracts, glaucoma, nystagmus, retinal detachment, retinitis pigmentosa and strabismus.

### **Physical Disability**

Conditions that impact the musculoskeletal, connective tissue or neuromuscular system are physically disabling conditions which may require an adaptation to one's school environment or curriculum. Examples include, but are not limited to, cerebral palsy, absence of some body member, clubfoot, nerve damage to the hand and arm, cardiovascular aneurysm (CVA), head injury and spinal cord injury, arthritis and rheumatism, intracranial hemorrhage, embolism, thrombosis (stroke), poliomyelitis, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, congenital malformation of brain cellular tissue and physical disorders pertaining to muscles and nerves, usually as a result of disease or birth defect, including, but not limited to, muscular dystrophy and congenital muscle disorders.

### **Hearing Disability**

A hearing loss of 30 decibels or greater, pure tone average of 500, 1000, 2000 Hz, ANSI, unaided, in the better ear. Examples include, but are not limited to, conductive hearing impairment of deafness, sensorineural hearing impairment or deafness, high or low tone hearing loss or deafness, and acoustic trauma hearing loss or deafness.

### **Specific Learning Disabilities**

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological or neurological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. Disorders may be manifested in listening, thinking, reading, writing, spelling or performing arithmetic calculations. Examples include dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysphasia, dyscalculia and other learning disabilities in the basic psychological or neurological process. Such disorders do not include learning problems due primarily to visual, hearing or motor handicaps; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; or an environmental deprivation.

### **Speech Disability**

Disorders of language, articulation, fluency or voice that interfere with communication, pre-academic or academic learning, vocational training or social adjustment. Examples include, but are not limited to, cleft lip and/or palate with speech impairment, stammering, stuttering, laryngectomy and aphasia.

## **Other Disabilities**

Not limited to conditions listed below:

- < *Mental, Psychoneurotic or Personality Disorders*: Any emotional or behavioral neurosis that has, or could create, an unstable condition in the individual=s actions.
- < *Cardiovascular and Circulatory Conditions*: Include, but are not limited to, congenital heart disease, rheumatic fever and chronic rheumatic heart disease, arteriosclerotic and degenerative heart disease, and other conditions of the circulatory system.
- < *Blood Serum Disorders*: Hemophilia, sickle cell anemia, HIV/AIDS and disorders where the cause is unknown.
- < *Respiratory Disorders*: Tuberculosis of the respiratory system, emphysema, pneumoconiosis and asbestosis, bronchiectasis, chronic bronchitis and sinusitis, other diseases of respiratory system.
- < *Diabetes, Epilepsy*: Other conditions that require an administrative or academic adjustment such as class schedules, parking and course adjustments, and do not fit into any of the above categories may also qualify.

## **Identifying Disabilities**

Each student brings a unique set of experiences to college, and a student with disabilities is no exception. While many learn in different ways, their differences do not imply inferior capacities. There is no need to reduce course requirements for students with disabilities. However, special accommodations may be needed, as well as modifications in the method of presentation and evaluation.

Determining that a student has a disability may not always be a simple process. Visible disabilities are noticeable through casual observation **B** an immediately recognizable physical impairment, for example, or the use of a cane, wheelchair or crutches.

Other students have what are known as hidden disabilities, which include hearing impairments, legal blindness, cardiac conditions, learning disabilities, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease and psychiatric or seizure disorders, among others.

Finally, there are students with multiple disabilities, which are caused by such primary conditions as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis or traumatic brain injury. Depending on the nature and progression of the condition or injury, it may be accompanied by a secondary impairment, in mobility, vision, hearing, speech or coordination, which may, in fact, pose greater difficulties.

Some students with disabilities will identify themselves as such by contacting the Office of Students with Disabilities and their instructors before or early in the semester. Others, especially those with “hidden” disabilities, may not identify themselves because of their fear of others: disbelief either about the legitimacy of their disability or the need for accommodation. Such students, in the absence of instructional adjustment, may run into trouble in their college work. In a panic they may identify themselves as disabled just before an examination and expect instant attention to their needs. If that happens, the faculty member should contact the Advisor for assistance in dealing with unanticipated accommodations.

**The faculty member should make an announcement at the beginning of the term or put a statement in the syllabus inviting students with disabilities to schedule appointments.**  
If you suspect that a student has a disability, discuss your concern with the student. You may find such an approach awkward, at least initially, but the end result will be beneficial if the student's circumstances are made known at the very outset.

If a disability is brought to your attention, refer the student to the Office for Students with Disabilities.

## Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities

A learning disability is any of a diverse group of conditions that causes significant difficulties in perceiving and/or processing auditory, visual and/or spatial information. Of presumed neurological origin, it covers disorders that impair such functions as reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia) and mathematical calculation (dyscalculia). No two students have exactly the same pattern or type of learning variance associated with a given learning disability.

*Drawing upon the student's own experience offers invaluable clues to the types of adaptation that work.*

A student may have average to superior intelligence and adequate sensory and motor systems and yet have a learning disability. The extraordinary achievements of numerous people with learning disabilities confirm the coexistence of learning disabilities and average to superior intelligence. But learning disabilities have only recently been identified, and these conditions still often go undiagnosed. That is why people with learning disabilities, as well as others, often mistakenly believe a learning disability is an intellectual deficiency, which it emphatically is not.

In fact, the marked discrepancy between intellectual capacity and achievement characterizes a learning disability. Documentation of the disability is required not only to

establish the need for special services but also to determine the kind of special services that are indicated. Students who are believed to have a learning disability that has not been previously or reliably identified should be referred to the Office for Students with Disabilities for consultation.

While a learning disability cannot be “cured,” its impact can be lessened through instructional intervention and compensatory strategies. In general, a variety of instructional modes enhance learning for students with learning disabilities, as for others, by allowing them to master material that may be inaccessible in one particular form.

In working with a student with a learning disability, the faculty member should try to identify the nature of the disability of the individual student to determine the kind of strategies that the student may need to compensate. Drawing upon the student’s own experience offers invaluable clues to the types of adaptation that work.

### **Strategies**

Once the faculty member knows the nature of an individual student’s disability, the faculty member may find the following strategies helpful.

#### **Auditory Processing**

Some students may experience difficulty integrating information presented orally, so they may not be able to follow the logic and organization of a lecture.

- < Provide students with a course syllabus at the start of the semester.
- < Permit a student to tape a class, if the student needs to listen to the class discussion more than once.
- < Outline class presentations and write new terms and key points on the chalkboard.
- < Allow the student to use a note-taker.
- < Repeat and summarize segments of each presentation and review its entirety.
- < Provide students with a written copy of major points, models, outlines, etc.

In dealing with abstract concepts, paraphrase them in specific terms and illustrate them with concrete examples, personal experiences, hands-on models and such visual tools as charts and graphs.

### **Visual Processing**

Reading may be slow and deliberate and comprehension may be impaired for a student with a learning disability, particularly when dealing with large quantities of material. For such a student, comprehension and speed are expedited dramatically with the addition of auditory input.

- < Make required book lists available prior to the first day of class to allow students to begin their reading early or to have texts put on tape.
- < Provide students with chapter outlines or study guides that cue them to key points in their readings.
- < Read aloud material that is written on the chalkboard or that is given in handouts or transparencies.

### **Memory Processing**

Memory or sequencing difficulties may impede the student's execution of complicated directions.

- < Keep oral instructions concise and reinforce them with a brief cue word.
- < Repeat or re-word complicated directions.

### **Note-Taking Alternatives**

Some students with learning disabilities need alternative ways to take notes because they cannot write effectively or assimilate, remember and organize the material while listening to a lecture.

- < Allow note-takers to accompany the student to class.
- < Permit tape recordings or make your notes available for material not found in texts or other accessible sources.
- < Assist the student, if necessary, in arranging to borrow classmate's notes.
- < Provide copies of your notes and transparencies.

### **Participation**

It is helpful to determine the student's ability to participate in classroom activities. While many students with learning disabilities are highly articulate, some have severe difficulty in talking, responding or reading in front of groups.

### **Specialized Limitations**

Some students with learning disabilities may have poor coordination or trouble judging distance or differentiating between left and right. Such devices as demonstrations from the student's right-left frame of reference and the use of color codes or supplementary symbols may overcome the perceptual problem.

### **The Science Laboratory**

The science laboratory can be especially overwhelming for students with learning disabilities. Unfamiliar equipment, exact measurement and multi-step procedures may demand precisely those skills that are hardest for students with learning disabilities to acquire.

- < Provide an individual orientation to the laboratory and equipment to minimize student anxiety.
- < Label equipment, tools and materials.
- < Make available to a student cue cards or labels designating the steps of a procedure to expedite the mastering of a sequence.
- < Use specialized adaptive equipment to help with exact measurements.

### **Writing Processing**

Some students with a learning disability have difficulty organizing written material or may misspell words. Allowing a student to have access to appropriate tools may help students with learning disabilities more clearly express their comprehension of the course material.

- < Permit a student to use a dictionary during a test.
- < Allow a student to use a computer and a spell-checking program.

### **Behavior**

Because of perceptual deficiencies, some students with learning disabilities are slow to grasp social cues and are slow to respond appropriately. They may lack social skills, or they may have a difficulty sustaining focused attention. If such a problem results in classroom interruptions or other disruptions, it is advisable to discuss the matter privately with the student or with the Office for Students with Disabilities.

### **Evaluation**

A learning disability may affect the way a student is evaluated. If so, special arrangements may be necessary.

- < Allow students to take examinations in a separate, quiet room with a proctor. Students with disabilities are especially sensitive to distractions. Testing services are available

through the Office for Students with Disabilities.

- < Grant time extensions on exams and written assignments when there are significant demands on reading and writing skills.
- < Avoid overly complicated language in exam questions, and clearly separate them in their spacing on the exam sheet. For a student with perceptual deficits, for whom transferring answers is especially difficult, avoid using answer sheets, especially computer forms.
- < Try not to test on material just presented since more time is generally required to assimilate new knowledge.
- < Permit use of a dictionary, a word-processing program, proofreader or, in mathematics and science, a calculator. In mathematics, the student may understand the concept, but may make errors by incorrectly aligning numbers or confusing mathematical facts. A student may need to use grid paper or other special materials.
- < When necessary, allow students to use a reader, scribe, word processor, tape recorder or typewriter.
- < Consider alternative test designs. Some students with learning disabilities may find essay formats difficult. A student with a perceptual impairment may have trouble with tests requiring students to match different items.
- < Consider alternative or supplementary assignments to evaluate a student's mastery of the course material. Taped interviews, slide presentations, photographic essays or handmade models may lead to more accurate evaluations.

## **Teaching Students with Visual Disabilities**

Visual impairment varies greatly. Persons are considered legally blind when visual acuity is 20/70 or less in the better eye with the use of corrective lenses. Most persons who are legally blind have some vision. Others who have low vision may rely on residual vision with the use of adaptive equipment. Persons who are totally blind may have visual memory, the utility of which varies depending on the age when vision was lost.

Whatever the degree of impairment, students who are visually impaired should be expected to participate fully in classroom activities, such as discussions and group work. Students who are visually impaired may encounter difficulties in laboratory classes and field trips. With planning and adaptive equipment, these difficulties can be minimized.

### **Before or Early in the Semester**

- < Provide reading lists or syllabi in advance to allow time for arrangements to be made such as the taping of texts.
- < In cooperation with the Office for Students with Disabilities, assist the student in finding readers, note-takers or tutors, as necessary, or team the student with a sighted classmate or laboratory assistant.
- < Reserve front seats for low-vision students. Make sure seats are not near windows; glare can make it hard for a student to see the instructor or the board. If a guide dog is used, the dog will be highly disciplined and require little space.
- < Verbalize the content printed on transparencies or chalkboard notations.

### **During the Semester**

- < Face the class when speaking.
- < Convey in spoken words whatever you put on the chalkboard and whatever other visual cues or graphic materials you may use. Provide copies of all materials or request another student to write everything down for copies.
- < Permit lectures to be taped and/or provide copies of lecture notes, where appropriate.
- < Provide large-print copies of classroom materials by enlarging them on a photocopier, or print in at least 18 point using high-contrast, non-encumbered fonts.
- < Be flexible with assignment deadlines.
- < Plan field trips well in advance and secure whatever adaptations may be needed.
- < If a specific task is impossible for the student to carry out, consider an alternative assignment.

### **Examinations and Evaluations**

Students should not be exempt from examinations or be expected to master less content or achieve a lower level of scholastic skills because of a visual impairment. Alternative means of assessing understanding of the material may be necessary. The students themselves, because of their experience in previous learning situations, and the Advisor may offer suggestions on testing and evaluation strategies. The most expedient devices are alternative examinations (oral, large-print, or taped), time extensions for exams and the use of such aids as print enlargers, specialized computer programs or tape recorders. The Office for Students with Disabilities is available to assist with the administration of classroom exams.

## **Teaching Students with Physical Disabilities**

A wide range of conditions may limit mobility and/or hand functions. Among the most common permanent disorders are such musculoskeletal disabilities as partial or total paralysis, amputation or severe injury, arthritis, active sickle cell disease, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis and cerebral palsy. Additionally, health impairments such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, cystic fibrosis, lupus, respiratory and cardiac diseases may be debilitating and consequently, affect mobility. These conditions may also impair the strength, speed, endurance, coordination and dexterity necessary for proper hand function. Conditions such as cerebral palsy often involve sensory and speech dysfunction. While the degree of disability varies, students may have difficulty getting to or from class, performing in class and managing out-of-class tests and assignments.

### **Going to and from Classes**

Physical access to classrooms is a major concern of students who are physically disabled. Those who use wheelchairs, braces, crutches, canes or prostheses, or who fatigue easily, find it difficult moving about, especially within the time constraints imposed by class schedules. Occasional lateness may be unavoidable. Tardiness or absence may be caused by transportation problems, inclement weather, elevator or wheelchair breakdown or the need to wait for physicians' appointments. Going from class may pose similar problems, especially in cases of emergency.

- < Consider whether physical access to a classroom is a problem before or early in the semester and discuss it with the student and, if necessary, the Office for Students with Disabilities.
- < Be prepared to arrange for a change of classroom or building if the classroom or building is not accessible to students with mobility impairments. Also be prepared to move class temporarily if an elevator is out of service.
- < Familiarize yourself with the building's emergency evacuation plan and assure that it is manageable for students who have mobility impairments.

### **In Class**

Some courses and classrooms present obstacles to the full participation of students who have physical disabilities. In seating such students, every effort should be made to integrate them into the class. Relegating students to a doorway, a side aisle or the back of the room should be avoided. Even such apparently insurmountable barriers as fixed seating may be overcome by arranging for a chair to be unbolted and removed to make room for a wheelchair.

Laboratory stations too high for wheelchair users to reach or transfer to, or with insufficient under-counter knee clearance, may be modified or replaced by portable stations. Otherwise, the student may need the assistance of an aide to perform the laboratory experiment.

Students with hand-function limitations may have difficulties both in the laboratory and in the classroom, taking in-class writing assignments and taking written tests. The instructor should be prepared to utilize the following accommodations:

- < Permit the use of a note-taker or tape recorder.
- < Team the student with a laboratory partner or assistant.
- < Allow in-class written assignments to be completed out of class with the use of a scribe or other appropriate aid, if necessary.

The Office for Students with Disabilities will administer oral tests or will provide space and supervision for extended testing time. It is also available for alternative testing arrangements.

### **Out-of-Class Assignments**

For students who have mobility impairments or hand-function impairments, using the library for reading or research assignments may present obstacles. The student may have to arrange with library personnel for access to card catalogs, book shelves, microfiche and other equipment. Because the completion of required work may be delayed, the extension of deadlines and the use of "Incomplete" grades may be appropriate.

Off-campus assignments may pose similar problems of access to resources. Instructors should consider such expedients as advance notice to students who rely on special transportation, the extension of deadlines and alternative assignments and the use of "Incompletes."

## **Teaching Students with Hearing Disabilities**

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may use a wide range of services depending on the language or communication system they use.

Some people who are deaf are members of a distinct linguistic and cultural group. Often people who are hearing impaired have been deaf for a long time. Some may live in a community or extended family that includes numerous other individuals who are hearing impaired. They may use American Sign Language as their first language. Therefore, members of this cultural group are bilingual, and English is their second language. As with any cultural group, people who are deaf have their own values, social norms and traditions. Because of this, faculty should be sensitive and attentive to cross-cultural information in the classroom setting. Some students who are hearing impaired may use American Sign Language interpreters in the classroom setting.

Indications that a student has a hearing loss may include a student's straining to hear, intense concentration on the speaker's face, use of loud or distorted speech, requests to repeat or spell words and consistent failure to respond.

Hard of hearing refers to those individuals who may use speech, reading and/or hearing aids to enhance oral communication. Hearing aids or amplification systems may include public address systems and transmitter/receiver systems with a clip-on microphone for the instructor. For those who use speech reading, only 30 to 40 percent of spoken English is comprehensible even for those who are highly skilled.

For people who are deaf or hard of hearing who choose to speak, feedback mechanisms are limited; therefore, vocal control, volume, intonations and articulation may be affected. These secondary effects are physical and should not be viewed as mental or intellectual weaknesses.

### **Things to Remember**

- < Students who are deaf or hard of hearing will benefit from front-row seating. An unobstructed line of vision is necessary for students who use interpreters and for those who rely on speech reading and visual cues. If an interpreter is used, the student-s view should include the interpreter and professor. If the speaker is in a shadow or standing by a window with movement outside of it, the person who is “speech reading” may have difficulty seeing or attending to the speaker-s mouth.
- < Keep your face within view of the student and speak in natural tone.
- < When using an interpreter, speak directly to and maintain eye contact with the student, not the interpreter.
- < Recognize the processing time the interpreter takes to translate a message from its original language into another language (whether English to American Sign Language or vice versa) because this may cause a short delay in the student’s receiving information, asking questions and/or offering comments. During translation lag times, maintain a comfortable eye contact and postural regard with the student.
- < Repeat questions and remarks of other people in the room.
- < Use visual aids and the chalkboard to reinforce spoken presentations when possible.
- < If requested, assist the student with identifying a note-taker.
- < When possible, provide the student with class outlines, lecture notes, lists of new technical terms and printed transcripts of audio and audiovisual materials.
- < Do not hesitate to communicate with the student in writing when conveying important information such as assignments, scheduling, deadlines, etc.
- < Do not obstruct the student-s view of the interpreter by walking between them.
- < If the speaker has a beard or mustache that covers part or all of the lips, remember that a student who “speech reads” will have a hard time following a lecture or class discussion.

- < Use audiovisual equipment that provides good audio clarity.
- < Try to reduce the amount of ambient noise in the environment, such as fans or background noise.

## **Teaching Students with Emotional/Social Disabilities**

Students with emotional and social disabilities present some of the most difficult challenges to an instructor. Like some disabilities, these impairments may be hidden or latent, with little or no effect on learning. Unlike students with other kinds of disabilities, emotional disabilities may manifest themselves in behavior ranging from indifference to disruptiveness. Such conduct may make it difficult to remember that students with emotional and social impairments have little control over their disabilities.

One of the most common psychological impairments among students is depression. The condition may be temporary **B** a response to inordinate pressures at school, on the job, at home or in one's social life. Depression may be manifested as a pathological sense of hopelessness or helplessness which may provoke, in its extreme, threats or attempts at suicide. It may appear as apathy, disinterest, inattention, impaired concentration, irritability or as fatigue or other physical symptoms resulting from changes in eating, sleeping or other living patterns.

Anxiety is also prevalent among students and may also be the reaction to stress. A student need not be psychologically impaired to experience anxiety. Mild anxiety, in fact, may promote learning and improve functioning. Severe anxiety, however, may reduce concentration, distort perception and weaken the learning process. Anxiety may manifest itself as withdrawal, constant talking, complaining, joking or crying, or extreme fear, sometimes to the point of panic. Bodily symptoms might include episodes of lightheadedness or hyperventilation.

Students are susceptible to a myriad of other social and emotional disorders, including expressing inappropriate classroom behavior or inadequate performance of assignments. Some troubled students who are undergoing treatment take prescription medication to help control disturbing feelings, ideas and behavior. This medication might cause undesirable side effects such as drowsiness or disorientation.

In dealing with psychological conditions that impair the functioning of the affected student, follow the principles outlined for working with students with any disabilities in the Overview section of this handbook. If the behavior begins to affect others, your course, or your instructions, consider the following suggestions:

- < Discuss inappropriate behavior with the student privately and forthrightly delineating the limits of acceptable conduct. It may be appropriate to have a witness to your conversation.
- < In your discussions with the student, do not attempt to diagnose or treat the psychological

disorder, only the student's behavior in the course.

- < If you sense that discussion would not be effective, or if the student approaches you for therapeutic help, refer the student to the Advisor for Students with Disabilities.
- < If abusive or threatening behavior occurs, refer the matter to the Dean of Student Services and/or call 911.

## **Teaching Students with Speech Disabilities**

Speech impairments range from problems with articulation or voice strength to complete loss of voice. They include difficulties in projection, as in chronic hoarseness and esophageal speech; fluency problems, as in stuttering; and nominal aphasia, which alters the articulation of particular words or terms.

Patience is the most effective strategy in teaching students with speech impairments.

Some of these difficulties can be managed by such mechanical devices as electronic "speaking" machines or computerized voice synthesizers. Others may be treated through speech therapy. Speech impairments can be aggravated by the anxiety inherent in oral communication in a group.

### **Teaching Strategies**

- < Give students the opportunity, but do not compel them to speak in class.
- < Permit students the time they require to express themselves, without unsolicited aid in filling in gaps in their speech. Don't be reluctant to ask the student to repeat a statement. While waiting for a student to find a word or to complete an expression, maintain comfortable eye contact and posture with the student.
- < Address students naturally and in your regular speaking voice. Don't assume the "spread phenomenon" they cannot hear or comprehend.
- < Consider course modifications, such as one-to-one presentations and the use of a computer with a voice synthesizer.

## **Teaching Students with Other Disabilities**

Many other conditions may interfere with a student's academic functioning. Some of their symptoms, like limited mobility or impaired vision, and the types of intervention required may resemble those covered elsewhere in this handbook. The general principles set forth in the

Overview section apply, particularly the need to identify the disability and to discuss with the student both its manifestations and the required accommodations. The following are brief descriptions of some of the more prevalent disabilities among students as well as recommended accommodations.

### **HIV/AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)**

HIV/AIDS is caused by a virus that destroys the body's immune system. This condition leaves the person vulnerable to infections and cancers that can be avoided when the immune system is working normally. The virus is transmitted primarily through sexual contact or needle sharing with intravenous drug users. It is not transmitted through casual contact.

Although manifestations of HIV/AIDS are varied, depending on the particular infections or diseases the individual develops, extreme fatigue is a common symptom. Because of the different manifestations, classroom adaptations will likewise vary.

Students with HIV/AIDS may be afraid to reveal their condition because of the social stigma, fear and/or misunderstanding surrounding this illness. It is therefore mandatory that confidentiality be maintained. In addition, if the issue should arise in class it is important for faculty to deal openly and non-judgmental with it and to foster an atmosphere of understanding.

For general classroom considerations, refer to the Overview section. If cancer is involved, see the section below. For particular impairments, see the applicable sections on specific abilities.

### **Cancer**

Because cancer can occur in almost any organ system of the body, the systems and particular disabling effects will vary greatly from one person to another. Some people experience visual problems, lack of balance and coordination, joint pains, backaches, headaches, abdominal pains, drowsiness, lethargy, difficulty in breathing and swallowing, weakness, bleeding or anemia.

The primary treatments for cancer (radiation therapy, chemotherapy and surgery) may engender additional effects. Radiation therapy can cause violent nausea, drowsiness and fatigue, thus affecting academic functioning or attendance. Surgery can result in amputation, paralysis, sensory deficits, and language and memory problems.

For general accommodations, refer to the Overview section. For particular impairments, see the applicable sections on specific disabilities.

### **Cerebral Palsy**

Cerebral palsy is caused by an injury to the brain, which may have occurred before, during or shortly after birth. The injury results in disorders of posture or movement. Manifestations may include involuntary muscle contractions, rigidity, spasms, poor coordination, poor balance or poor spatial relations. Visual, auditory, speech, hand-function, convulsive

disorders and mobility problems also may occur.

For appropriate classroom accommodations, refer to sections on speech and visual impairments, physical disabilities and hand-function impairments.

### **Traumatic Brain Injury**

Students with traumatic brain injuries are becoming increasingly more prevalent. These students often exhibit one or more of the following symptoms: short-term memory problems, serious attention and concentration deficits, sensory dysfunction, cognitive deficits, behavior problems, problems of judgment and organization, and anxiety attacks.

For general classroom considerations, refer to the Overview section and the sections on learning disabilities and/or seizure disorders.

### **Multiple Sclerosis**

Multiple sclerosis is a progressive disease of the central nervous system, characterized by a decline of muscle control. Symptoms may range from mild to severe and include blurred vision, legal blindness, tremors, weakness or numbness in limbs, unsteady gait, paralysis, slurred speech, mood swings or attention deficits. Because the onset of the disease usually occurs between the ages of 20 and 40, students are likely to be in the process of adjusting to their newly diagnosed condition.

The course of multiple sclerosis is highly unpredictable and individual. Periodic remissions are common and may last from a few days to several months. As a result, mood swings may vary from euphoria to depression. Striking inconsistencies in performance are not unusual.

For appropriate classroom accommodations, refer to sections on speech and visual impairments, physical disabilities and hand-function impairments.

### **Muscular Dystrophy**

Muscular Dystrophy refers to a group of hereditary, progressive disorders that most often occur with young people, producing degeneration of voluntary muscles of the trunk and lower extremities. The atrophy of the muscles results in chronic weakness and fatigue and may cause respiratory or cardiac problems. Walking, if possible, is slow and appears uncoordinated. Manipulation of materials in class may be difficult.

Refer to the section on physical disabilities and hand-function impairments for appropriate accommodations.

### **Respiratory Problems**

Many students have chronic breathing problems, the most common of which are bronchial asthma and emphysema. Respiratory problems are characterized by attacks of

shortness of breath and difficulty in breathing, sometimes triggered by stress, either physical or mental. Fatigue and difficulty climbing stairs may also be major problems, depending on the severity of the attacks. Frequent absence from class may occur, and hospitalization may be required when prescribed medications fail to relieve the symptoms.

For appropriate classroom accommodations, refer to the section on physical disabilities and the Overview section.

### **Seizure Disorders**

Students with epilepsy and other seizure disorders are sometimes reluctant to divulge their conditions because they fear being misunderstood or stigmatized. Misconceptions about these disorders (that they are forms of mental illness, contagious and untreatable, for example) have arisen because their ultimate causes remain uncertain. Hereditary factors may be involved and brain injuries and tumors, occurring at any age, may give rise to seizures. What is known is that seizures result from irregularities in the electrical activity of the brain.

### **Types of Seizures**

*Petit Mal.* Means “little” seizure and is characterized by eye blinking or staring. It begins abruptly with a sudden dimming of consciousness and may last only a few seconds. Whatever the person is doing is suspended for a moment but resumed once the seizure is over. Often, because of its briefness, the seizure may go unnoticed by the individual as well as by others.

*Psychomotor.* Seizures range from mild to severe and may include staring, mental confusion, uncoordinated and random movement, incoherent speech and behavior outbursts, followed by immediate recovery. They may last from two minutes to a half hour. The person may have no recollection of what happened, but may experience fatigue.

*Grand Mal.* Seizures may be moderate to severe and may be characterized by generalized contractions of muscles, twitching and limb jerking. A few minutes of such movements may be followed by unconsciousness, sleep or extreme fatigue.

Students with seizure disorders often take preventive medication, which may cause drowsiness and temporary memory problems. Such medication makes it unlikely that a seizure will occur in class.

### **In the Event of a Grand Mal Seizure**

Follow these procedures if a student experiences a grand mal seizure:

1. Keep calm. Although the manifestations may be intense, they are generally not painful to the individual.
2. Remove nearby objects that may injure the student during the seizure.

3. Help lower the person to the floor and place cushioning under his/her head.
4. Turn the head to the side so that breathing is not obstructed.
5. Loosen tight clothing.
6. Do not force anything between the teeth.
7. Do not try to restrain bodily movement.

After a seizure, deal forthrightly with the concerns of the class in an effort to forestall whatever negative attitudes may develop toward the student.

### **Sickle Cell Anemia**

Sickle cell anemia is a hereditary disease that reduces blood supply to vital organs and oxygen supply to the blood cells, making adequate classroom ventilation an important concern.

Because many vital organs are affected, the student may also suffer from eye disease, heart conditions, lung problems and acute abdominal pain. At times, limbs or joints may be affected. The disease is characterized by crisis periods with extreme pain, which may necessitate hospitalization and/or absence from class. Completing academic assignments during these periods may not be possible.

For appropriate classroom accommodations, refer to sections on visual and hand-function impairments, as well as the Overview.

### **Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse is a condition of physiological and/or psychological dependence on any of a variety of chemicals, such as illegal drugs and alcohol. Individuals who are recovering from drug or alcohol abuse or who are in treatment programs to assist their recovery are covered by federal anti-discrimination legislation and are eligible for college services for students with disabilities.

These students may experience psychological problems such as depression, anxiety or very low self-esteem. They may exhibit poor behavioral control and, if they are using medication as part of their treatment, they may experience undesirable side effects.

Refer students showing symptoms of substance abuse to the Advisor for Students with Disabilities.

Refer to the Overview and the section on psychological impairments for additional classroom considerations.

## **Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

*Section 504, Federal Register/Vol. 45, No. 92, pp. 30937-30944*

Section 504 is designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. It provides that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives or benefits from federal financial assistance. "Persons with disabilities" means any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment.

### **Admissions and Recruitment**

Qualified persons with disabilities may not, on the basis of disability, be denied admission or be subjected to discrimination in admission or recruitment. Institutions may not make pre-admission inquiry as to whether an applicant for admission is a person with a disability. After admission, the college may make inquiries on a confidential basis as to disabilities that may require accommodation.

### **Academic Adjustments**

Colleges shall make such modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability, against a qualified applicant or student with a disability. Academic requirements that the recipient cannot demonstrate that are essential to the program of instruction being pursued by such student or to any directly related licensing requirement will not be regarded as discriminatory within the meaning of this section.

Modifications may include changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree requirements and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted. Colleges shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no student with a disability is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by the school because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

All questions relating to students with disabilities are to be referred to the Advisor for Students with Disabilities.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990. This act protects millions of Americans with disabling conditions from discriminatory practices in public accommodations (including colleges), employment, transportation and telecommunications. The ADA extends the coverage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The ADA protects every person who either has, used to have, or is treated as having a physical or mental disability which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Individuals who have serious contagious and noncontagious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, epilepsy or tuberculosis also are covered under the auspices of ADA.

### **Employment**

Colleges, as employers of students, faculty and staff, may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabling conditions and must reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applicants or employees unless undue hardship would result.

### **Public Services**

Colleges may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabling conditions by excluding them from participating in or denying them the benefits of the services, programs and activities of the college.

### **Public Accommodations**

Public facilities of colleges, including student unions, athletic arenas, auditoriums, libraries, recreational facilities, etc., must be accessible to individuals with disabling conditions.

### **Telecommunications**

Telecommunication relay services for hearing and speech impaired persons must be provided.

## **State Guidelines**

### **Ch. 240. F.S. Postsecondary Education**

*240.152 Impaired and learning disabled persons; admission to postsecondary institutions; substitute requirements; rules.*

Any person who is hearing impaired, visually impaired, or dyslexic, or who has a specific learning disability, shall be eligible for reasonable substitution for any requirement for admission to a state university, community college, or degree career education institution where documentation can be provided that the person's failure to meet the admission requirement is related to the disability. The State Board of Education, the Board of Regents, and the State Board of Community Colleges shall adopt rules to implement this section and shall develop substitute admission requirements where appropriate. History. -- s. 1, ch. 86-194.

*240.153 Impaired and learning disabled persons; graduation, study program admission, and upper-division entry; substitute requirements; rules.*

Any student in a state university, community college, or degree career education institution who is hearing impaired, visually impaired, or dyslexic, or who has a specific learning disability, shall be eligible for reasonable substitution for any requirement for graduation, for admission into a program of study, or for entry into upper division where documentation can be provided that the person's failure to meet the requirement is related to the disability and where the failure to meet the graduation requirement or program admission requirement does not constitute a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program. The State Board of Education, the Board of Regents, and the State Board of Community Colleges shall adopt rules to implement this section and shall develop substitute requirements where appropriate. History. -- s. 2, ch. 86-194.

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