

Faculty Dos and Don'ts

How to Support Students with Approved Accommodations issued by GW's Disability Support Services Office (DSS)

Generally, under federal and local laws (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the District of Columbia Human Relations Act, collectively referred to as the "ADA") and university policy, the university must provide reasonable accommodations to a qualified student with a known disability if needed in order to afford the student an equal opportunity to participate in university programs, activities, and services. If a student approaches you to discuss issues relating to a disability or to request an accommodation, you should refer the student to DSS to acquire appropriate documentation. Below are some "dos and don'ts" on how best to support students who have approved accommodations due to a disability.

DO

ACCESS

- Incorporate principles of Universal Design for Learning.
go.gwu.edu/universaldesign
- Include the DSS Statement of Information in your syllabus.
disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/faculty-support
- Assist students in following the university's policies. All requests for accommodations should be made through the Disability Support Services Office. Individual faculty should avoid making informal short-term or long-term arrangements, under any circumstances. This protects students, faculty, and the institution by ensuring consistency and takes much of the burden off individual faculty members, who are often ill-equipped to determine whether an accommodation is appropriate or how to provide it.
- Communicate with TAs or coordinators to ensure accommodations are properly implemented.

DON'T

- Refuse to provide reasonable accommodations, or the academic adjustments that have been approved by DSS. Eligibility for services and accommodations under the ADA is the job of DSS.
- Make assumptions about a student's ability to participate in the class or work in a particular field. Concerns that students may not be able to succeed are usually based on assumptions, not facts.
- Refuse to provide copies of handouts, or orally describe information written on the chalkboard, or face the class when referring to something written on the chalkboard, etc., if these accommodations have been determined to be appropriate for a student.
- Be rude or share negative judgments.

DO

DON'T

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Respect the privacy of students with disabilities.
 - Confer with the student privately about how DSS-approved accommodations will be implemented. If students approach you in class to discuss their accommodations, ask to speak privately.
 - Treat disability information which has been disclosed to you as confidential.
- Disclose the details of a student's accommodation, medical documentation, or details about a student's disability to others or allow your TAs to do the same in class, in a social setting, or online.
 - Send group emails to students identifying those with an accommodation or disclosing any other personally identifiable information.
 - Ask a student about their disability or underlying medical condition.

DEVICES, EQUIPMENT & SERVICE ANIMALS

- Support our students' use of devices and equipment as an approved accommodation.
- Touch a student's device, equipment, or service animal or allow other students in your class to do so. If you have a question or concern about the use of the above items, don't approach a student in class, contact DSS instead.

RECORDINGS

- Recognize that some students are eligible to record your lectures as an accommodation. GW Lecture Recording Guidance is located at go.gwu.edu/lecturerecording.
- Refuse to permit students to tape record lectures as an accommodation, when DSS approved recording as an accommodation.

TESTING

- Administer exams with accommodations directly when at all possible. If not, visit DSS's test accommodations guidelines go.gwu.edu/accommodations.
- Make every effort to provide DSS with the final copy of your exam 48 hours prior to the date and time when the student will take your exam (in circumstances where DSS is handling test proctoring for you). Failure to do so can negatively impact the testing experience for multiple students.
- Refuse to provide approved extended time for tests or assignments for students with an approved accommodation on the mistaken assumption that doing so would require that all students be given additional time.

Visit disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/faculty-support or contact DSS if you have any questions or concerns about a student or an accommodation:

Alisa Major, Interim Director
Disability Support Services (DSS)
Office for Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement
✉ dss@gwu.edu 📞 202-994-3214
🌐 disabilitysupport.gwu.edu

Caroline Laguerre-Brown, JD
Vice Provost for Diversity,
Equity, and Community Engagement
✉ clbrown@gwu.edu 📞 202-994-7297