



**DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

Faculty Guide to  
Disability Accommodations

[www.mvc.edu/dss](http://www.mvc.edu/dss)

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## **Faculty Guide: Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by impairments in reciprocal social interaction and communication, as well as the presence of repetitive and stereotypic patterns of behaviors, interests, and activities. The impairment can range from mild to severe, while the specific symptoms displayed can vary widely from individual to individual.

### **Recommendations for instructing students with ASD:**

- Provide a syllabus with clearly defined course expectations and deadlines, explanations of assignments and class discussions, and thoroughly review all areas of the syllabus to the class.
- Make a public statement on the first day of class directly inviting and encouraging students to contact you in order to discuss approved academic adjustments.
- Be open-minded to suggestions provided by the student in order to best accommodate their needs.
- Inform the students in advance about changes in routine or expectations. Keep your learning environment organized and as predictable as possible.
- Differentiate instruction to support multiple learning styles. Supplement verbal information with visual aids, charts, graphs, and videos.
- Simplify instructions as much as possible. Speak clearly and slowly when addressing your classroom.
- Provide examples whenever possible.
- If and when group work is assigned, provide assistance to the students in finding a partner or group to work with.
- Make yourself available to students outside of the classroom, and be sure to inform the class of when these times are scheduled for.

### **Possible Academic Adjustments:**

- Ability to copy notes from another student or have access to a designated note taker.
- Use of audio recording for lectures.
- Extended testing time and ability to take exams in a distraction reduced setting.
- Preferential seating.
- Assistive technology for reading and exams.

### **Faculty Guide: Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

The term “Deaf” is often mistakenly used to refer to all individuals with hearing difficulties, however this term usually refers to an individual with very little or no functional hearing and who often uses sign language to communicate. “**Hard of Hearing**” refers to an individual who has a mild-to-moderate hearing loss who may communicate through sign language, spoken language, or both. The term “Hearing Impaired” is a term offensive to many deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. They consider the terms "deaf" and "hard of hearing" to be more positive.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals may experience the following challenges while in an educational environment:

- Learning by lecture only
- Participating in classroom discussions
- Giving Oral Presentations
- Taking Oral Exams
- Note Taking

### **Classroom Strategies for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Students**

- Face the classroom when speaking. Avoid speaking while simultaneously writing on a chalk/whiteboard.
- Speak directly to the student, not to their sign language interpreter.
- Provide captioning for any film shown while in class.
- Engage in an interactive discussion with the student regarding their suggestions for academic adjustments.
- Ensure that not more than one student speaks at a time while classroom discussions are occurring.
- Never obstruct the student’s view of the interpreter.
- If classroom lights are dimmed, be sure that the interpreter is still sitting in a well-lit area.
- When a class member asks a question, repeat their question prior to answering.
- Provide visual information as much as possible.
- Ensure space is available towards the front of the class for both the student and interpreter, if he/she has one.

### **Possible Academic Adjustments**

- Access to shared notes/Note Taker
- Assistive Technology
- Extended time for exams
- Use of interpreter

- Preferential seating
- Captioning of lectures/class media
- Assistive Listening Devices

### **Faculty Guide: Learning Disabilities**

A learning disability is a neurological condition that interferes with a person's ability to store, process, or produce information. Learning Disabilities can affect one's ability to read, write, speak, spell, compute, reason, as well as affect their attention, memory, coordination, and social skills. Learning Disabilities are generally identified when the student's level of achievement, as measured on individually administered standardized tests, is substantially below that expected given their age, measured intelligence, and age-appropriate education.

#### **Recommendations for instructing students with visual impairments:**

- Provide a syllabus with clearly defined expectations, deadlines, and explanation of assignments.
- Provide the student with class notes prior to the beginning of each lecture.
- Identify textbooks as early as possible so that students can request it in an alternate format prior to the start of the semester.
- Breakdown large assignments and deadlines in order for students to manage these tasks.
- Reduce classroom distractions whenever possible.
- Use a variety of assessment tools.
- Provide the student with prompt and explicit feedback.
- Use visual aid and hands on activities/demonstrations whenever possible.
- Encourage students to utilize your office hours.

#### **Possible Academic Adjustments:**

- Access to calculator (when appropriate)
- Ability to record class lectures
- Preferential seating
- Access to a note taker
- Alternate Format texts
- Assistive Technology
- Extended testing time
- Reader for tests
- Distraction reduced environment for test taking

## **Faculty Guide: Chronic Medical and/or Health Condition**

Chronic health and medical impairments include conditions that pose a significant barrier to a student's ability to function in an educational environment. Common types of chronic medical/health conditions include but are not limited to:

- Cancer
- Diabetes
- HIV
- Fibromyalgia
- Asthma
- Epilepsy
- Allergies

### **Recommendations for instructing students with Chronic Medical Conditions:**

- Be open to having an interactive dialogue with the student regarding their needs and suggestions they may have regarding accommodations.
- Provide clear information about task expectations.
- Encourage students to speak with you during office hours.
- Provide structure and predictability.
- Let students know in advance about changes in routine or changes to the class schedule.
- Differentiate instruction to support multiple learning styles.

### **Possible Academic Adjustments:**

- Ability to copy notes from another student in class.
- Ability to record classroom lectures.
- Flexibility to exit class/exams to attend to health needs.
- Extended time for exams.
- Preferential seating in class.
- Adaptive furniture.
- Speech recognition software.
- E-books.

## **Faculty Guide: Psychological and/or Emotional Disability**

Psychological Disorders refer to a range of syndromes and conditions characterized by different types and degrees of emotional, developmental, cognitive, and/or behavioral manifestations. This emotional state can severely impact and impair a person's educational, social, and/or occupational functioning. Common types of psychiatric disorders include but are not limited to: Major Depressive Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, and Schizophrenia.

### **Recommendations for instructing students with Psychological/Emotional Disabilities:**

- Provide a syllabus with clearly defined course expectations and deadlines, explanations of assignments and class discussions, and thoroughly review all areas of the syllabus to the class.
- Make a public statement on the first day of class directly inviting and encouraging students to contact you in order to discuss approved academic adjustments.
- Be open-minded to suggestions provided by the student in order to best accommodate their needs.
- Inform the students in advance about changes in routine or expectations. Keep your learning environment organized and as predictable as possible.
- Make yourself available to students outside of the classroom, and be sure to inform the class of when these times are scheduled for.
- Differentiate your instruction to support multiple learning styles.
- If the situation arises, discuss inappropriate classroom behavior with the student in a private and respectful manner.

### **Possible Academic Adjustments:**

- Ability to take breaks during their class and exams in order to attend to mental health needs.
- Extended time for exams, and taking exams in a distraction reduced setting.
- Preferential Seating in the classroom.
- Audio recording of classroom lectures.
- Ability to copy notes from a volunteer note taker.

## **Faculty Guide: Visual Impairment**

A visual impairment can range from mild to moderate to severe. Individuals are classified as legally blind if their visual acuity is 20/200 or less even with corrective lenses, and partially sighted if their visual acuity is 20/70. This means a person who is legally blind can see something at 20 feet, which a person with normal vision can see at 200 feet. The age at which a person developed their visual impairment can greatly impact their ability to cope with the disability, as well as their willingness to seek help from outside sources.

### **Recommendations for instructing students with visual impairments:**

- Materials, desks, and other objects in the classroom should be maintained in consistent locations.
- Provide a syllabus with clearly defined expectations, and be prepared to provide it in an alternate format upon request. Other class materials should also be provided in an alternate format whenever possible.
- Identify textbooks as early as possible so that students can request it in an alternate format prior to the start of the semester.
- Use verbal cues rather than visual cues or body movements while addressing the class.
- Verbally describe objects and processes whenever possible.
- Control lighting when presenting materials in class as students may be sensitive to certain lights or glare.
- Assist as needed with allowing space for a service animal.
- Engage in an interactive conversation with the student to discuss their needs, and encourage students to utilize office hours.

### **Possible Academic Adjustments:**

- Enlarged handouts/Alternate format texts
- Ability to record class lectures
- Preferential seating
- Readers and scribes for exams
- Service animal
- Assistive Technology
- Talking calculator
- Ability to use laptop in class to take notes
- Extended time for exams
- Distraction reduced environment for test taking