Disability Services for Students
New Faculty Information

Syllabus Statement: Provide a statement in your syllabus requesting that students inform you of any specific needs to ensure that those needs are met in a timely manner. If possible, this statement should be read aloud to the class to assure those students with print disabilities hear the information. This approach also demonstrates to students that you are sensitive to and concerned about meeting the needs of all of the students you teach. It further affords students the opportunity to make their accommodation needs known to you early in the semester. An example of an appropriate statement in a syllabus is as follows:

Sample Syllabus Statement:

Both in compliance with and in the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we would like to work with you if you have a disability that is relevant to the work in this course. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss reasonable academic accommodations, please contact your instructor in a timely fashion at the beginning of the semester. You may also contact the Office of Disability Services for Students at 269-387-2116 (or at wmich.edu/disabilityservices).

Confidentiality: Disability information must remain confidential. **The entire class should never be informed there is a student with a disability enrolled, except at the request of the individual student.** Any information a student with a disability provides you is to be used solely and specifically for arranging reasonable accommodations for the course of study. DSS recommends that students with disabilities meet with you during office hours or by special appointment, and not to discuss accommodations just before or after a class session. During the appointment, the particulars of arrangements for accommodations can be discussed and agreed upon in private.

Textbooks, Coursepacks, Syllabi, and Videos: When selecting textbooks, please consider texts that have alternate formats available. Many publishers now offer electronic versions (provided on a compact disk for use with adaptive technology) for students with visual impairments or specific learning disabilities, however, a service provider, such as DSS, must request the materials. There is often a three-week turn around, which can hinder a student’s ability to study and prepare appropriately for your class. If possible, select a textbook with an accompanying study guide or auxiliary materials to maximize comprehension for all students.

As you gather various journal articles and portions of books into coursepacks, please use the original copies or copies that are as clean and clear as possible. For students needing to have the materials scanned into electronic format, enlarged, or Brailled, clear copies are essential. Recognition software cannot generate images from blurred or poor quality copies. Providing students with coursepacks that have to be altered can be a major undertaking when the materials are not of the best quality.
Whenever possible, post any course materials on your course Web site. This allows students with disabilities prompt access in order to maximize their learning. For the visually impaired students, assistive technology, such as screen readers, can provide auditory versions of your materials, such as syllabi, PowerPoint presentations and lecture outlines. Other students with disabilities can download and print out before class any materials needed in preparation for daily lectures and so on.

If you tend to use videos as a method of instruction, captioned or transcripted versions must be used. Having the content in written form for students with hearing impairments allows for better participation in activities associated with the video. DSS does not currently transcribe videos, but the office can help with finding transcription service.