

Essential Faculty Guidance for Coordinating Disability Access: Purpose of the Disability Accommodation Process

Nondiscrimination is the Goal

The fundamental purpose of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is to ensure that a person with a disability is not discriminated against within the academic and overall college experience.

Access is the Goal, Not a Specific Accommodation

The goal is equitable access (not to implement a specific accommodation), which occurs when disabled individuals are able to:

- Fully engage and participate in the same activities, campus services, benefits and experiences offered to a person without a disability.
- Utilize the same information shared with everyone.
- Have the same opportunity to achieve.

Facilitating accommodations makes the environment more accessible so the above can occur.

Facilitate Equal Opportunity, Not Reduced Expectations or Success

- Accommodations should let students into the same opportunities everyone else has.
- Accommodations are not facilitated to ensure student success.
- Accommodations should not remove responsibilities, expectations, or standards held for all students.
- Facilitating access need not fundamentally alter the academic experience by reducing the expectations necessary to achieve the learning and program objectives.

Analyze Access Through the Interactive Process

While many accommodations can be facilitated in a self-explanatory manner upon receipt of the Course Accessibility Letter, there will be times when SAS and a professor will need to discuss the reasonableness of an accommodation through an interactive process/conversation.

Examples of additional discussion might include:

- How to facilitate specific accommodations such as the Attendance, Exam, and Assignment Adjustment (AEAA) Accommodation.
- How to address specific environments such as an accommodation in a lab environment.
- Establishing access for a specific student, such as a blind student, in a math or economics course.

Furthermore, at times, the listed accommodations on the Course Accessibility Letter combined with the course learning objectives and the course design do not necessarily align. Or a professor may be concerned about fundamental alteration of course learning objectives with the application of an accommodation. In these cases, more discussion may be necessary between SAS and professors. Professors should not deny accommodations without consulting with SAS.