

Office of AccessAbility Services

Faculty Handbook



Introduction

This handbook is intended to provide an overview of the general laws affecting the Eastern Connecticut State University community when working with students with disabilities. The purpose of this handbook is to introduce different disabilities and provide possible accommodations as well as other pertinent information.

WELCOME

Welcome to the Office of AccessAbility Services (OAS)! Our services are designed to meet the unique educational needs of students with documented permanent and temporary disabilities. The philosophy and mission of the program is to encourage independence, assist students in realizing their academic potential, and to facilitate the elimination of physical, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers. The OAS staff is here to assist faculty and staff members in meeting the educational challenges of students with disabilities.

OAS Contact Information

Office of AccessAbility Services

Wood Support Services Center

Room 240

83 Windham St.

Willimantic, CT 06226

Phone: (860) 465-0189

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[*OAS website link*](#)

From The President

Eastern Connecticut State University is a diverse community of learners, a campus that fosters respect for all students and other community members. We want to be sure that students with disabilities are respected on campus and provided with the support needed for them to achieve the same success as other students.

Interaction with faculty members is key to developing our students intellectually and socially. I encourage members of the faculty to use this handbook as a helpful guide to assist them in working with students with disabilities to provide the teaching, mentoring, modeling, and support so critical to student success.

Eastern has a legal obligation to provide a level playing field for students with disabilities through reasonable accommodations. Some University practices, such as the universal design of course curriculum, help all students, not just those with disabilities.

Assisting students with disabilities is a team effort involving our faculty, students and members of the Office of AccessAbility Services staff. At the same time that they work collaboratively to meet the needs of students with disabilities, each member of the faculty has special gifts they can share. In the same way, by providing reasonable accommodations, we can give students with disabilities opportunities to demonstrate their own special talents.

The Office of AccessAbility Services (OAS) is always available to help faculty members in their role in supporting students with disabilities or to answer any questions or concerns they may have. Please feel free to call or visit OAS should the need arise.

Thank you for supporting our students and making their education experiences at Eastern meaningful.

Sincerely,

Elsa M. Núñez
President

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Laws

Two major laws govern the services and accommodations provided by the Office of AccessAbility Services to the students with disabilities.

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This legislation protects the civil and constitutional rights of people with disabilities. It prohibits organizations which receive federal funds from discriminating against otherwise qualified individuals on the sole basis of a handicap.
- The Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Amendments Act of 2008. This act prohibits discrimination of individuals based on disability. It requires public transportation services to be accessible to individuals with disabilities and prohibits discrimination in employment of qualified individuals with disabilities.

A “person with a disability” includes “any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, and learning.”

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the student and his/her disability is of the utmost importance. There are many hidden disabilities and the student has no obligation to reveal the nature of his/her disability to anyone, including his/her support. As the student's support, you must respect the student's wishes and protect the confidentiality of the student.

Process of Accommodation

The Office of AccessAbility Services (OAS) determines what accommodations a student will need on a case-by-case basis, based upon appropriate documentation. When OAS agrees that a student needs accommodations, they will provide the student with letters of accommodation to give to their professors. The letters of accommodation should outline what accommodations a student will need. Students will not gain access to these accommodations without the letter of accommodation from OAS. Most accommodations for a student will be supplied for and organized by OAS, and the faculty member should work with OAS to facilitate extra needs. A faculty member has the *first right of refusal*, meaning if he/she believes they can accommodate the student's needs, then he/she do not have to utilize the services of OAS. Faculty and staff may refuse to accommodate students who do not show proper documentation from OAS. A detail of accommodations and how they are achieved will be included further. Additional questions can be directed to AccessAbility Services.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The following is a guideline which will briefly describe some of the accommodations faculty can encounter. All accommodations can, and will, be provided by OAS if the faculty member cannot. Faculty should communicate with OAS if they cannot provide an accommodation themselves, or if they have questions on how certain accommodations will be executed.

- **Extended time to complete tests:** Some students may require extended time periods to complete quizzes and exams. The faculty member can deliver the test materials to OAS and the student will schedule a time to take the test with OAS. Otherwise, faculty will be informed by the letter of accommodation how much time they must allot a student to finish a test.
- **Extended time for reading/writing assignments:** Students with disabilities may need extended time on reading and writing assignments. The extended time for assignments should be qualified at the discretion of the faculty member and is appropriate for the time frame of the assignment.
- **Distraction Reduced Setting:** Some students may require a more controlled environment over a classroom to complete exams and tests. In these cases OAS can schedule a time and place where the student can take the test, and will administer the exams, ensuring the integrity of the exam.

- **Alternate Exam Forms:** Students may need exam materials to be in an alternate format. For example, some students may need the exam to be written in Braille, larger font, or on audio cassette/cd. In these cases, faculty members should deliver the exam materials to OAS where they will be changed appropriately.
- **Alternate format for class material:** Students may require that class materials (i.e. assignments, articles, text books ect.) have an alternative format. For example, some students may require Braille or larger text, or audio cassettes/ cd. In these cases, faculty members (or students) should deliver class materials to OAS where they will be changed appropriately.
- **Alternate Library Material Format:** Library materials such as reserved books and articles may have to have alternate formatting for some students. For example, some students may need material to be put into Braille, larger font, or on an audio cassette. In these cases the faculty must find an alternate format themselves or have the materials delivered to OAS where the material will be alternated appropriately.
- **Flexibility in attendance requirements in case of health-related absences:** Some student's disabilities may lead to missed classes. Students are responsible for approaching the faculty member early in the semester to determine an agreed upon process with respect to absences. Please negotiate with the student acceptable limits on absences and appropriate ways to make up missed work. It is not generally acceptable to penalize a student's grade who has proper documentation due to attendance. However, it is acceptable to penalize for any lack of participation resulting from absences.

- **Tape Recorder:** In some cases, students may require a tape recorder to record class lectures. OAS will supply the student with this equipment, if needed.
- **Computers and Adaptive Equipment:** Computers and adaptive equipment such as laptops and scanners may be assigned to some students to use in class. This is for the purpose of note taking, and/or accessing information through adaptive software.
- **Extra time going from one class to another in inclement weather:** Some students may have trouble with mobility and therefore have trouble getting to classes which are back to back on time. These students should discuss this with their professors early in the semester. Professors are urged to discuss the acceptability of arriving to class late and/or leaving class early with the student.
- **Special seating in the classroom:** Students may require special seating for various reasons. For example, they may require a seat in the front of the classroom and close to the professor.
- **Lab assistance:** Students who need an extra set of hands for labs, such as chemistry labs, will be assigned a student worker to help them. These workers have similar duties to those mentioned below. Student workers are expected to assist the disabled student by carrying out their commands, and not to do the work for that student.
- **Use of laptop:** OAS can supply laptops for students who need. These are laptops that cannot access the internet.
- **Service Animals:** By law, service animals are allowed into all buildings insofar as the animal is easily identifiable as a service animal, and if the animal does not act inappropriately.

- **FM Loop system (small microphone amplification system)**: Students may require the use of an FM loop system and this equipment is provided by OAS.

Student Workers

Student workers are hired by OAS and serve various roles which will be described below. These workers may be required to attend classes with or without the student in need.

Note Takers

Students with disabilities may require a note-taking assistant to compensate for their specific disability. Note takers are hired by OAS and will identify themselves to the professor. The note taker is expected to come to class prepared with a good attitude, notebook, pen, pencil, and possibly a recorder depending on the disability. The note taker is not required to participate in classroom discussions or group work, nor should they be expected to do the class assignments.

Note takers Responsibilities

- A quality set of notes is:
 - Legible and Timely in delivery
 - Thorough in content and clearly organized
- Commit to regularly attending class and taking detailed notes during the lecture.

- Notes will be dropped off to the Office of AccessAbility Services. Copies can be made in the OAS.
- Notes should be dropped off within 24 hours of the class meeting.

Discrepancies

Should you find a problem with the note taker (i.e. not adequate quality) please contact Dr. Pamela J. Starr at the Office of AccessAbility Services immediately.

Phone: 860-465-0189 **Email:** Starrp@easternct.edu



Proctoring

A student may need alternate test-taking conditions to accommodate their disability.

Examples include extended time, a distraction reduced setting, a computer for essay format exams, or a proctor to scribe tests. It is the student's responsibility to discuss with their professors how exams will be administered, by the professor or OAS. The alternate testing arrangement provides for a more accurate measure of a student's knowledge, and does not, in any way, compromise the testing process. Proctors can expect to be spot checked, in some cases

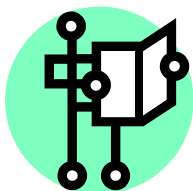
anonymously, by the Office of AccessAbility Services.

Proctors found deficient in carrying out their duties will be so advised and, where necessary, have their employment terminated. Only one proctor is responsible for a single testing session.

Proctor's Responsibilities

- Maintaining quiet and controlled test conditions during test.
- Establishing order and preparing student for test.
- Distributing tests and when needed, reading instructions on tests.
- Keeping and reporting time accurately.
- Establishing and maintaining the absolute security of all test booklets.
- Ensuring that all tests are turned in and sealed for shipment.
- There will be no assistance given to the student during the test.
- All testing must be in one room.
- All doors should be closed to keep external noise at a minimum.

- Students may not leave the room. (Except in an emergency)
- Visitors are not permitted in the room(s) during a test, only proctors, professors, and the OAS staff.



Reader Services

Students with visual or reading impairments, who are unable to read standard printed material, may be assigned a reader. A reader will be available for the student at their convenience. Students may need their required reading in alternative formats, such as Braille, audiotape or large print.

Reader's Responsibilities

- The reader will read assignments to the student.

The reader will read the student's homework with them.

Scribes

Some students may need assistance writing for exams. In these cases, they are assigned a scribe. In this process, the student will answer exam questions verbally and the scribe will put that answer on the test via writing. For this reason, the test will usually be taken outside of the classroom and can be administered by OAS. The scribe will also be a proctor in these cases.

Scribe Responsibilities

- The student will verbally answer an exam while the scribe writes the answers on the exam; the scribe is only to write what the student dictates. The scribe also carries the responsibilities of a proctor.

Faculty Responsibilities

University Liability

The University and its employees are responsible to provide adequate accommodations to a student with a documented disability.

Documented Accommodations

Faculty may refuse to accommodate any student who has not shown proper documentation from the Office of AccessAbility Services.

Classroom/Teacher Access

The classroom location along with the professor's office must be accessible for students with mobility impairments. If not, then the classroom must be changed, or the professor must arrange for an alternative meeting.

Alternate Handout Format

If handouts are provided to all students, the instructor must be able to provide the handout in alternate format if requested. All handouts must be made available to the student with the disability

on the same day they are available to students without disabilities.
OAS can assist

Library Material

If materials are requested from the library, they must be made available in an alternate format for students whose disability requires such.

Alternate Exam Form

The exam form must be altered if the testing procedure puts the student with a documented disability at a disadvantage. The only exception is if the test is to measure a particular skill.

Extended Time

Extended time is a reasonable accommodation for a student whose documentation specifically calls for that accommodation. The OAS will have met with the students who meet this requirement. In order for students to receive extended time they will be required to present the teacher with a letter of accommodation from the OAS.

Testing Accommodations

Readers, Proctors, Scribes, or the use of adaptive equipment must be provided for a student with a documented disability.

If Notified in Writing

Faculty/staff members are responsible for cooperating with the Office of AccessAbility Services in order to provide adequate accommodations in a reasonable and timely manner.

Faculty/staff should meet with students who provide a letter requesting accommodations to establish the means of providing accommodations.

If Not Notified in Writing

If the student has requested accommodations and the faculty/staff member has not been notified in writing by OAS, the faculty/staff member should request a letter of accommodation from the student. The student should go to OAS to get the letter. If the disability is apparent, such as mobility impairment then you may accommodate the student until you receive official notification.

If Questioning the Appropriateness of Accommodation

If there are any questions or concerns about the appropriateness of an accommodation, OAS should be contacted for clarification. All accommodations should continue while the issue is being resolved.

Syllabus Statement for Students with Disabilities

A key part to academic success for students with disabilities is their accommodations. To support the OAS efforts in promoting awareness, we ask that you include a statement on your syllabus regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. Below is a proposed statement for your use.

“If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of AccessAbility Services at 860-465-0189.

To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Office of AccessAbility as soon as possible. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from the Office of AccessAbility services. Your cooperation is appreciated.”

Faculty and staff *do not* have the right to access the student’s diagnostic information, nor do they have the right to deny the appropriate accommodations. However, faculty and staff *do* have the right to request specific reasonable accommodations from the Office of AccessAbility Services.

“What If ...?”

What if the student with the disability wishes to share her or his specific condition with the classroom? Am I required to allocate the opportunity?

Yes, it is the student's decision whether or not they choose to inform the class of their disability.

What if the student with the disability puts forth no effort in my class but is constantly complaining about his or her grades? After exercising all of my options is it within my rights to fail the student?

Absolutely, if the student puts forth no effort, and you feel they deserve a failing grade, it is within your rights as a professor to fail them. If you are concerned with the student's lack of effort at any time during the semester, feel free to contact OAS 860-465-0189

What if the student with the disability is absent so often due to his or her illness that they are weeks behind? Am I required to allow them ample time to make up the work?

Yes and No. You are required to give them time to complete their assignments. However, if their time ends and the assignments are not finished, you are permitted to fail them. It is the professors right to determine if the student has missed too much class time and therefore too much essential class curriculum.

Tips for Disability Awareness

The OAS has a disability etiquette handbook available for additional information.

Reporting Problems

If you are experiencing problems related to your student's participation in class and you feel it may be due to his or her disability, please contact Dr. Pamela J. Starr at the Office of AccessAbility Services

Phone: 860-465-5573

Email: starrp@easternct.edu

Ambition brought us to school,

motivation makes us learn.

It is the staff at ECSU that pushes us

to reach for the stars.

