

FAQ - Faculty

Why does W&J provide accommodations?

As a program that receives federal financial assistance, W&J is required to provide academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to ensure equal access for students with disabilities who are admitted through the College's regular admission process.

What is my responsibility as an instructor when it comes to students registered with the disability support services office?

Instructors have the responsibility of implementing all approved accommodations listed on a student's accommodation letter and to discuss any issues with the disability services office. Instructors and students should meet in-person to discuss the accommodations and how they will be applied to the course. These meetings should take place in a separate appointment - not before or after class - in order to protect the privacy of the student. Students are asked to follow this process when they receive their letters. If a student has not made an appointment, please ask them to do so.

May I ask a student what his/her disability is?

No. Instructors should provide the approved accommodations listed on a student's accommodation letter. Students are not required to share disability information with instructors, and it is not necessary for you to know this information. Focus on providing the accommodations, not on the disability itself. Even if your intentions are good, asking a student about the details of the disability is not okay. If a student chooses to be open about a disability to you, please keep this information confidential. Do not ask questions in front of other students, and do not tell students that you know someone with the same disability and don't understand why they need accommodations. Disability symptoms can vary in different people.

Is there proctoring assistance available should I need it for a student with testing accommodations?

Yes. You can submit a request for proctoring on the [Proctoring Request Form](#) page.

What recommendations do you have for structuring the discussion with a student when s/he presents the accommodation letter?

First review the listed accommodations and make a notation of any issues that you will need to discuss with the disability support services office. Also make the student aware of any accommodations that are not applicable to your course and why they are not applicable. The rest of the discussion should center around how the accommodations will be implemented in your course. Below are a few examples based on the most frequently requested accommodations:

- **Time 1/2 on tests and/or Solitary/Low Distraction Environment:** Review the course syllabus with the student. What are the dates of the exam? Are there any scheduling conflicts? Do you need to set up a reminder with the student? Do you need proctoring assistance (see [Proctoring Request Form](#) page to request services).
- **Permission to record lectures:** Student should provide a permission form for you to sign. If recording is not applicable to your course or it would fundamentally alter your course, please notify the student and contact the disability support services office. The goal is provide access to course information, so providing PPT slides or lecture notes will be helpful if audio recording is not available.
- **Access to PowerPoint slides or lecture notes:** Discuss how these will be available to the student (posted on Sakai, provided in-person) or alternatives for the student to access and understand course content if lecture notes or Pp presentations are not used.
- **Flexibility with attendance or assignment due dates:** Due to the complexity of these accommodations, the disability services office will contact you via email if a student has these types of accommodations to discuss how they are applicable to your course.

I received a letter of accommodation for a student, and there are some accommodations that I can't provide or they don't apply to my course. What do I do?

If there are any issues with providing the accommodations listed or you have questions, please contact the disability support services office at dss@washjeff.edu or 724-223-6008. If any of the accommodations fundamentally alter the nature of your course, you will need to provide more detailed information about this in consultation with other faculty and disability support services. Keep in mind that accommodation letters are general and written to all course instructors and students may not need all accommodations for every course. Please engage in a productive and open conversation with the student and clearly note what the student needs in order to have equal access to your course.

The student presented the letter of accommodation but has told me that s/he doesn't need to use all of the accommodations. Is that okay?

Yes. Accommodation letters are written to all course instructors, and a student may not need every accommodation for every course. For example, a student may say that s/he does not need to test in a solitary/low distraction environment if your class size is small.

What if I suspect one of my students has a disability?

Please recommend that the student contact the disability services office: dss@washjeff.edu or 724-223-6008.

I referred a student to the disability services office, but s/he has not yet presented a letter of accommodation.

A student who has been referred to the disability services office may not always end up receiving academic accommodations. There could be a number of reasons: the student does not wish to request accommodations, the student does not have a disability, or the student is in the process of getting documentation or testing.

Are accommodations retroactive?

No. A student can request accommodations at any time, but they can't be applied to previous work or courses. Every effort will be made to complete the accommodations process in a timely manner.

Are there particular teaching strategies that I may use to assist students with disabilities?

Yes. Many institutions are exploring Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which supports the development of curricula and educational environments that are inclusive of diverse student populations. The strategies listed below help to decrease the need for formal academic accommodations:

- Make lecture notes and/or PowerPoint slides available to all students
- Provide a detailed syllabus, clearly noting course objectives, assignments, assessments, readings, due dates, exam dates, etc.
- Design exams so that there is additional time already built in for those who may need it
- Allow students to audio record lectures so they may check notes for missing information
- Choose textbooks that are available in audio format
- Provide course materials in PDF format so they may be used with reading software applications or Adobe read-out-loud
- Explore the possibility of a flipped classroom (For example: lectures recorded ahead of time and available to view online; class time used for hands-on course work)
- Choose a text with a study guide
- Write reminders on the board/whiteboard

Can I talk about accommodations and my course with the student's parents/guardians?

It's recommended the discussion take place with the student, who can then share the information. You can speak to parents/guardians only if the student is present during the conversation or has set up a FERPA password and the parent/guardian can tell you what that password is. You may also contact the disability support services office to help navigate the discussion.

A student is struggling in my course even with accommodations. What are the next steps?

There may be a number of reasons why the student continues to struggle even with accommodations. The best next step would be to contact the student with your concern and to discuss what the issues are and how you can help them succeed in the course. You can refer the student to disability support services for additional assistance.