

DISABILITY SERVICES/ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDE

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Introduction

One hundred-eighty students identified themselves last year as needing accommodations at Berry College for a physical, learning, or psychological disability. Students with learning disabilities represented the largest population of those served. Some disabilities are readily visible; more frequently, they are not and may be difficult to identify. It is not unusual for a student to have multiple disabilities. The number of students requesting accommodations increased twenty percent last year. Hopefully, this document will answer many of the questions you may have about the services provided these students and how you may help these students in your classes and/or during advisement.

The office responsible for disability services is The Academic Support Center (ASC), which promotes access to education and works to identify, encourage, and facilitate the academic goals of students with physical, learning and psychiatric disabilities. The ASC provides direct support to students and collaborates and consults with teaching and administrative faculty. The ASC facilitates equal educational opportunities for these students by integrating them into college programs and activities by providing case-specific accommodations for their documented disabilities and by working with the larger community to overcome architectural, attitudinal, and bureaucratic barriers.

The advocate for services to students with disabilities is Wilma Maynard, Director of the ASC, who reports to the Dean of Academic Services, Dr. David Slade.

This handbook describes services and appropriate academic accommodations available at Berry College and emphasizes the important responsibilities and rights of faculty, students, departments, and the institution. Please let us know if you have any comments or additions to this guide, or if we can be of any assistance to you in your work with students.

Contact information:

Wilma Maynard, Academic Success Center Director
wmaynard@berry.edu
Phone: 706-238-6960
Office: Evans 106
FAX: 706-368-6969

Kim Sippel, Academic Success Center Office Manager
ksippel@berry.edu
Phone: 706-233-4080
Office: Evans 106

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Interacting with People with Disabilities

General Considerations

Do not assume a person with a disability needs your help; ask before providing or offering accommodations. If you offer assistance and the person declines, do not insist. If the person accepts, ask how you can best help and do your best to accommodate her needs.

When introduced, offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or artificial limbs can usually shake hands. It is an acceptable greeting to use the left hand for shaking.

Treat adults as adults. Yes, at eighteen, your students are considered legal adults. The following are some suggestions for interacting with people with a physical disability:

- Avoid patronizing people who have a physical disability. Do not pat people in wheelchairs on the shoulder or touch their head. Never place your hands on a person's wheelchair, as the chair is a part of the body space of the user. If possible,

sit down when talking to a person who uses a wheelchair so that you are at the person's eye level.

- Avoid actions and words that suggest the person should be treated differently. It is appropriate to ask a person in a wheelchair to go for a walk or to ask a blind person if he or she sees what you mean.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability. Do not communicate through another person. If a hearing-impaired person uses an interpreter, look at the person and speak to the person, not to the interpreter. When speaking to a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, look directly at the person and speak slowly. Avoid placing your hand over your mouth when speaking. Written notes may be helpful for short conversations.
- When first meeting a person who is blind, identify yourself and any others who may be with you. If you are a sighted guide for a person with a visual impairment, allow the person to take your arm at or above the elbow so that you guide rather than propel.
- When talking with a person with speech impairment, listen attentively, ask short questions that require short answers, avoid correcting, and repeat back your understanding of what the person said if you are uncertain.
- Foremost, treat people with disabilities with the same level of respect and consideration that you have for others.

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Appropriate Terminology

People with disabilities are people first. [The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act 2008 \(ADAAA\)](#) officially changed the way people with disabilities are referred to legally and reinforced the model: the person first and then the disability (e.g., "student with a disability" rather than "disabled student").

Some suggestions:

- Avoid referring to people by the disabilities they have; use their names.
- Use the word disability when referring to someone who has a physical, mental, emotional, sensory, or learning impairment.
- Do not use the word handicapped. A handicap is WHAT a person with a disability cannot do.
- Avoid labeling individuals as victims, or "the disabled," or names of conditions. Instead, refer to "people with disabilities" or "someone who has epilepsy."
- Avoid terms such as wheelchair-bound. Wheelchairs provide access and enable individuals to get around. Instead, refer to a person as someone who uses a wheelchair or someone with a mobility impairment.

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Strategies for Optimizing Learning

Many teaching strategies that assist students with disabilities are also known to benefit students without disabilities. Instruction provided in an array of approaches will reach more students than using one method. Two important points to remember: 1) the needs of and the necessary accommodations for students with disabilities will vary dramatically even within the same disability type. Always talk with the student about his specific needs and consult with The Academic Support Center when needed, and 2) most disabilities are not obvious. NEVER assume that you do not have a student with a disability in your class.

The following suggestions are designed to assist you in meeting the growing diversity of student needs in the classroom, particularly those related to disabilities. Please let us know if there are other strategies that you have found to be effective.

During Course Development:

Place a statement in your syllabus and make an announcement at the first meeting of the class such as:

"If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me immediately. Please request that Wilma Maynard, Director of the Academic Success Center, send a letter verifying your disability."

This approach preserves students' privacy and also indicates your willingness to provide accommodations as needed.

When designing a web site for your course, make sure the site is accessible. This is particularly an issue for students who rely on screen readers that "speak" what is on the monitor. For guidance in designing an accessible web page, contact Cameron Jordan, Web Manager at campus box 279, cjordan@berry.edu.

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During Initial Course Registration:

Make class syllabus and list of required texts available by request to the ASC and students; this allows time to acquire materials in alternative formats and to begin reading assignments. The ASC provides students who are visually impaired or dyslexic with alternative texts from Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC). When possible, books on tape are provided by [Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic](#). To record an entire book on tape takes an average of six weeks; alternative texts (accessible PDF or DOC file of the text) may take a minimum of two weeks or a maximum of six weeks to prepare by AMAC. Therefore, it is imperative, and mandated by federal law, that books and materials required for a course be available to the student at the time of pre-registration. Students requiring AMAC services will contact you by email for this information if it is not available from the bookstore or Viking Web.

Be available to discuss class content and your teaching style in your office with the student needing accommodations.

Early in the Semester:

Because many students with disabilities need additional time to process and complete assignments, convey expectations at the beginning of the course (e.g., grading, material to be covered, due dates) in written and oral format.

Announce reading assignments well in advance to assist students using taped materials or other alternative formats. Visually impaired students often must scan any handouts to their computer for "reading." Make sure the copy is legible.

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General Strategies for Teaching and Presentation:

- Begin class with a review of the previous lecture and an overview of topics to be covered that day; give questions the students should be able to answer by the end of the lecture. At the conclusion of the lecture, summarize key points.

- Highlight major concepts and terminology both orally and visually. Be alert for opportunities to provide information in more than one sensory mode (i.e. power-point, overhead slides).
- Emphasize main ideas and key concepts during lecture and highlight them on the blackboard or overhead.
- Speak directly to students; use gestures and natural expressions to convey further meaning.
- Diminish or eliminate auditory and visual distractions.
- Present new or technical vocabulary on the blackboard or overhead, or use a handout. Make available handouts in alternative formats if needed (e.g., photocopy, 18-20 pt. font instead of 12 pt.).
- Use visual aides such as diagrams, charts, and graphs; use color to enhance the message.
- Give assignments both orally and in written form; be available for clarification.
- Provide adequate opportunities for participation, questions and/or discussion.
- Provide timelines for long-range assignments. Use sequential steps **with due dates** for long-range assignments; for example, for a lengthy paper, 1) select a topic, 2) write an outline, 3) submit a rough draft, 4) make necessary corrections with approval, 5) turn in final draft. Give feedback on early drafts of papers so there is adequate time for clarification, rewrites, and refinements.
- Make comments on papers or exams with a black felt-tipped pen. (Some students with visual impairments cannot see some colors, particularly blue, purple, and red.) Remember, all materials handed out in class must be in an accessible format.
- Provide study questions and review sessions to aid in mastering material and preparing for exams. All students will profit from these strategies. The ACS will pay a tutor identified by you to conduct review sessions for your entire class.
- Give sample test questions; explain what constitutes a good answer and why. Again, this is something all your students can use. ACS would like to have copies of materials that you develop in this area to keep on file for helping students who come into our office seeking help in your academic area.
- To test knowledge of material rather than test-taking savvy, phrase test items clearly and economically.
- Be concise and avoid double negatives.
- Facilitate the formation of study groups for students who wish to participate. ASC will pay a student tutor selected by the professor to lead the study group.
- Encourage students to seek assistance during your office hours and to use [campus support services](#).

For more specific information on individual disabilities see [Optimizing Learning for Students with Specific Disabilities](#).

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General Information

What is a Disability?

On September 25, 2008, the President signed the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 ("ADA Amendments Act" or "Act"). The Act emphasizes that the definition of disability should be construed in favor of broad coverage of individuals to the maximum extent permitted by the terms of the ADA and generally shall not require extensive analysis.

The Act makes important changes to the definition of the term "disability" by rejecting the holdings in several Supreme Court decisions and portions of EEOC's ADA regulations. The effect of these changes is to make it easier for an individual seeking protection under the ADA to establish that he or she has a disability within the meaning of the ADA. From [The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act 2008 \(ADAAA\)](#)

A disability is defined as a physical, mental or emotional condition that affects one or more major life activities (such as processing information, writing, hearing, or seeing). The ADAAA expanded the definition of major life activities and added major bodily functions to the conditions covered under the ADA. Berry College is mandated by federal law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, to ensure that:

"No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States ...shall, solely by reason of ...disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from the participation in, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

What are the Laws Related to Disability?

Section 504 protects the rights of qualified individuals who have disabilities; the law defines a "qualified person with a disability" as one "who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity."

Disabilities covered by legislation include (but are not limited to) AIDS, blindness, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, head injuries, hearing disabilities, specific learning disabilities, loss of limb(s), multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, emotional disabilities, speech disabilities, spinal cord injuries, and vision disabilities.

Under the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the college may not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students. Students who have self-identified, provided documentation of disability, and requested reasonable accommodations are entitled to receive approved modifications of programs, appropriate academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids that enable them to participate in and benefit from all education programs and activities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act contains more specific information about compliance issues in post-secondary education than the American With disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law in 1990. The ADA, however, did extend the law to cover public and private institutions of higher education and any other entities that receive funding. The ADA has also facilitated access to public services.

[The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act 2008 \(ADAAA\)](#) was enacted to restore the intent and protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

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Disability Services

Eligibility Requirements for Services

Students must submit appropriate documentation of disability and meet with Wilma Maynard in the ASC to establish eligibility for services. Even though students are encouraged to register with the ASC upon entrance to the college, it is not unusual for students to wait and avoid seeking assistance until they experience difficulties.

Although students are not required to identify themselves as having a disability, they are not eligible for support until they have done so. Students are required to submit written documentation of sensory, physical, psychological or other health impairments. Typically, this will be a medical report or letter from a physician. Students with learning disabilities are required to submit current diagnostic testing (within the last three years) that meets specific guidelines.

The ASC determines appropriate academic adjustments and arranges to provide needed auxiliary aids. Accommodations are provided at no expense to the student and are based upon each individual's unique needs. The process of requesting and receiving accommodations is interactive; all people involved--the student, the instructor and the ASC--and sometimes individual departments and programs--work together to make sure the process works. It is the responsibility of the director to determine eligibility for services based on documented disability and consultation with others as needed.

The law requires that records and information documenting a disability remain confidential. Therefore, it is not appropriate for faculty members or department staff to request written copies of medical records of testing information. All questions regarding the credibility of a student's qualification for services should be directed to the ASC for clarification.

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Accommodations

The Academic Success Center facilitates Berry College's compliance with these federal laws by providing services and *appropriate/reasonable* accommodations to students with disabilities. This does not mean excusing a person with a disability from responsibilities or lowering expectations in the classroom, but rather allowing the student to use her or his abilities to assimilate information or perform class work in a manner that allows fair competition with other students.

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, job, activity, or facility that enables a qualified individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to an individual without a disability.

The purpose of academic accommodations is to adjust for the effect of the student's disability, not to dilute academic requirements. The evaluation and assigning of grades should have the same standards for all students, including students with disabilities.

Accommodations help make it possible for a student with a disability to learn the material presented and for an instructor to evaluate fairly the student's understanding of the material without interference because of the disability. Accommodations are designed to lessen the effects of the disability and are required to provide fair and accurate testing to measure knowledge or expertise in the subject.

Examples of Accommodations

Berry College can provide a range of services and assistance to meet the needs of student with disabilities. The following is a brief description of accommodations and services that may be requested by students. Students must submit a formal request to the ASC to receive these services.

Note takers:

Note takers are typically students with high academic standings who are recommended by the instructor and screened and hired by the ASC. Note takers may be provided to accommodate students with disabilities in the classroom. Examples of students who benefit from note takers include those unable to use their hands, and those with hearing impairments and severe auditory processing difficulties, or specific learning disabilities in written expression. In many cases, writing under time pressure during lectures is problematic for these students. Students needing this service are provided with a duplicate copy of notes from the note taker. However, students are encouraged to take their own notes (if they are at all able) and to use the additional set of notes as a supplement. Note takers will not provide notes to students when they are absent for non-disability-related reasons, unless approved by the ASC; thus, it is necessary for the instructor to notify the ASC when the student is absent.

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Reading/Readers:

Textbooks are read onto audiotape for students with visual impairments or severe reading disabilities. Materials can also be scanned to produce an electronic version that can be retrieved by synthetic speech. Students who are unable to physically hold a book or turn pages may also benefit from taped or scanned materials. If there is a student enrolled in your class who has requested reading services, you may be asked to provide textbook, reserved reading materials, and a syllabus well before the beginning of the term so that appropriate arrangements for reading the material can be made. The ASC also hires readers to read to the student when necessary. In order for the student to have access to the material, the ASC asks that you provide either the student or Ms. Maynard with these materials as early as possible. Your cooperation is critical in fulfilling the institution's responsibility to the student.

Modified Testing Conditions:

Some students with disabilities will need accommodations in order to be evaluated fairly. For example, a student who is blind may need either a reader, the test on disk so it can be "read" by the computer, or a Braille version of the exam. Accommodations will vary according to the needs of the student and the nature of the class and exams. Two of the most common testing accommodations are extended time and taking the exam in a distraction-reduced environment. The Director of the ASC is responsible for making decisions regarding the appropriateness of particular academic adjustments. This is done on an individual basis and often involves consultation with the faculty member if there are concerns regarding a particular course or exam. The instructor, department, and the ASC work together to provide appropriate exam administration. In cases where the instructor is not able to make these arrangements, the ASC will oversee exam administration and provide scribes, proctors, readers, etc.

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Registration Assistance:

Most students with disabilities are able to register independently. However, assistance may be provided in the registration process for those with severe hearing, dexterity, or visual problems. Some students are eligible for priority registration. This allows enough time for the Registrar's Office to schedule room changes when necessary because of physical access problems and for any complex issues to be addressed.

Specialized Equipment:

The ASC has 4 computers, a scanner, and a printer for word processing and Internet research.

A computer equipped with accessibility tools is available in the Computer/Microforms room(first floor) in Memorial Library for qualified students to use.

Students qualifying to use this specialized equipment should register with the User Support and Systems Technical Assistant in the library for instruction in using the equipment and its availability.

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Technology Access:

Questions or problems about technology access should be directed to Cameron Jordan cjordan@berry.edu.

Tutorial Support:

The Academic Success Center offers tutorial support for all Berry College students. Students with disabilities are encouraged to take advantage of existing tutorial support and labs available on campus.

Location and numbers of tutorial support:

Academic Support Center EVANS 106 Ext. 4080

Provides student tutors for individual classes

Software available in ASC

Strategies for Success

Time Management for Students

Study Skills

The Writing Center Memorial Library (second floor) Ext. 5903

Student tutors available for assistance with writing essays in any discipline

Math Lab Science Center 348 no phone

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Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Students

Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:

- Provide the ASC with current and complete disability documentation before requesting services.
- Know their specific needs as they relate to their disability and how their documentation supports these needs.
- Talk to their instructors. Let them know of any accommodations needed during the term. Ask the ASC to send letters to their instructors informing them that disability documentation is on file and specifying appropriate accommodations.
- If requesting testing accommodations, fill out and submit appropriate request forms before the specified due dates.
- Be proactive. Seek out help with a class or a problem early in the semester. Utilize the ASC in addition to other campus resources.

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Responsibilities of Faculty/Staff members

Every course syllabus should include a statement addressing the responsibilities of faculty and staff in relation to students with disabilities. For a sample syllabus statement and information on how to design an accessible web page, refer to "[Strategies for Optimizing Learning](#)".

1. If you are notified in writing by the ASC of a student's disability:

You have the responsibility to cooperate with the ASC in providing authorized accommodations in a reasonable and timely manner. The specific accommodation determines the amount of involvement required. Please see the examples of the most commonly requested accommodations for a description of necessary faculty and student involvement, refer to: "[Shared Responsibilities](#)".

2. If you have NOT been notified in writing by the ASC of a student's disability:

If a student requests an accommodation and you have not been notified of the student's need for accommodation, please refer the student to the ASC to request that you receive notification. If the student already has a letter on file, she simply needs to contact the director to activate services. If the student is new to the ASC, the process to review documentation and meet with the student may take some time. If the disability is obvious and the accommodation appears appropriate, you may need to provide the accommodation while awaiting official notification. If you are unsure, please call the ASC for assistance (Ext. 4080).

3. If a student discloses a disability to you:

Ask for an accommodation letter from the ASC. This letter describes the accommodations that the institution is legally mandated to provide. During an office hour or at another convenient time, discuss the letter and the accommodation with the student. Students MUST present a accommodation letter from the ASC to receive testing accommodations. If the student does not have a letter on file, he should be referred to the ASC to request one. Appropriate accommodations will be determined after reviewing documentation of the disability provided by the student.

4. If you have a question about the appropriateness of an accommodation:

Questions about the appropriateness of certain accommodations should be directed to the director of the Academic Success Center.

5. If a disability is suspected:

Share your concerns with the student regarding his or her performance. If the concern seems disability-related, ask if he has ever received assistance for a disability. If it seems appropriate, refer the student to the ASC office for further discussion and guidance. It is the student's decision whether or not to self-identify; however, to receive accommodations, disclosure to ASC with proper documentation is required.

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Shared Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to report disability-related needs to the faculty through the Academic Success Center in a timely manner. You are not required to anticipate individual needs. It is important to state that students with disabilities must inform you of any specific needs as soon as possible to ensure a timely response. For example, if a student waits until the day of an exam to ask for extended time or a separate testing area, the student has failed to make the request in a timely manner, and you are not obligated to comply with the request. If the student fails to ask for extended time until late in the semester, you are only

required to provide accommodations from the time the request is made (if supported by the ASC). You do not need to offer make up exams, or provide retroactive accommodations to students who have delayed notifying you of their needs.

When a student discloses a disability, it is important to ask what you can do to facilitate learning. It may be as simple as allowing the student to sit in the front of the class, or quite complicated if the student does not have a clear sense of his particular needs.

In advising or mentoring relationships, it is important not to discourage students from specific fields of study based on assumptions you may have about a disability. If the student meets the admission requirements, maintains the appropriate grades, and is otherwise qualified, the students should not be treated differently from a student without a disability. Your responsibility is to provide an education, and the student must meet and maintain academic standards.

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Examples of Shared Responsibility in the Most Commonly Requested Accommodations:

Testing:

Initial Steps:

Step 1: Student provides documentation to the ASC, and meets with the director to determine if and what types of accommodation are appropriate (e. g. extended time, distraction-reduced environment, scribe).

Step 2. Student meets with the director to go over approved accommodations and content of letter to faculty.

For Each Class:

Step 1. Student requests your signature on the *Exam Accommodation Request* form and meets with you to complete the requested information. If you are able to provide accommodations, such as ensuring that the student will have additional time to complete the exam, a request form does not need to be returned to the ASC. If you are unable to be responsible for personally proctoring the exam, please fill in specific instructions and sign the form. A downloadable *Exam Accommodation Request* form is available on the ASC website. The ASC will administer the test in the ASC testing center in Evans 106 and schedule a proctor, reader, or scribe, and secure any needed equipment. Designate how the exam will be delivered to the ASC (by student, email or personal delivery) and how the ASC should return the exam to you when it is completed. If you decide to have the exam delivered in a manner different from what you indicated on the request form, please let the ASC know.

Step 2. It is the student's responsibility to return the request form to the ASC at least three working days before the exam. If you keep the form for any reason, or if you would like to return it yourself, please remember that the ASC needs at least three working days to coordinate testing accommodations.

Step 3: Students are required to submit forms requesting **final exam accommodations** no later than one week before final exams.

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Note taking:

Step 1: Student completes registration as soon as possible to finalize his/her schedule in time to allow accommodations.

Step 2: Student requests note taker services form to ASC no later than the second week of registration, indicating whether she will locate her own note taker or will require assistance in locating one.

Step 3: The class instructor is asked to help locate a note taker. Students may present to you a letter that outlines recommended language for an announcement to be read in class. Do not identify the student with a disability when reading the announcement. Students who are qualified and interested in serving as note takers are instructed to contact Ms. Maynard in the ASC.

Step 4: The ASC will conduct an orientation for note takers at the beginning of each term. Note taker responsibilities are explained and note takers are educated in disability awareness. The ASC is available to support and problem solve with both students and note takers throughout the term to ensure an efficient and cooperative accommodation. Because the student must attend class to receive notes, if the student is absent for non-disability related reasons, he/she should not receive a copy of the class notes. Therefore, the instructor must keep the ASC informed of the student's absences.

Reading/Scanning:

Step 1: Student uses priority registration to finalize his schedule in time to allow for accommodations.

Step 2: Student requests that a letter notifying instructors of her disability be sent to faculty members. This letter explains that a student with a disability is enrolled and briefly outlines appropriate accommodations.

Step 3: Student meets with faculty member to secure a list of required readings for the class. If a formal syllabus is not yet available, a list of readings for the first two weeks of class is extremely helpful. If at all possible, books will be read or scanned in their entirety. If a class packet and /or reserved reading will be used, it is helpful to provide the student with copies of articles. If copyright permission is in the process of being secured, the articles can be given to the student to be read onto tape or scanned on computer disk and held until final approval is granted.

Step 4: Student checks with Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic to see if prerecorded versions of texts are available. If not, the ASC will have to make other arrangements (i. e. find student readers to record the text). Please note that it takes a minimum of one week for students to receive the first tape of a text from the ASC. The earlier you provide reading information and material to students with disabilities, the more prepared they will be for your class.

Step 5: Ensure that students get the academic help they need to succeed in class. Although a student may have an in-class aide (a note taker, sign language interpreter, etc.), these aides are not academic tutors. Students with learning disabilities can often benefit from ongoing tutorial assistance.

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Optimizing Learning for Students with Specific Disabilities

The following pages address some categories of disabilities and include a definition, characteristics, considerations, instruction strategies, and accommodations that may be recommended to assist the student:

ADD/ADHD

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADD and ADHD can affect both learning and behavior. These neurological conditions are caused by chronic disturbances in the areas of the brain regulating attention, impulse control, and the executive functions controlling cognitive tasks, motor activity, and social interactions. Hyperactivity may or may not be present. Although treatable, they are not curable. It is estimated that three to six percent of the population has ADD and/or ADHD.

Characteristics (may include):

- Unable to keep on task
- Easily distracted
- Poor time management skills
- Often unprepared for class, late for or misses appointments, and late for class
- Poor reading comprehension
- Difficulty with math problems that require changes in action, operation and order
- Difficulty with note taking because of inability to listen selectively during lectures
- Work poorly organized, especially in written work and essay questions
- Problems with following directions, listening and concentrating
- May blurt out answers

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

- Because these students often also have learning disabilities, effective accommodations may include those commonly used with students with learning disabilities.
- These students learn best through visual, auditory and hands-on approaches.

Accommodations (may include):

- Instructions or demonstrations presented in more than one way
- Concise, oral instructions
- Syllabus provided before the start of the semester
- Copies of classmate's and/or instructor's notes or overheads
- Extended time for exams
- Exams in a quiet, distraction-free environment
- Frequent breaks allowed during exam; exam given by page or by section rather than in its entirety
- Clear arrangement of test items on paper
- Use of blank card or paper to assist in reading
- Use of handouts and visual aids
- Extended time for in class assignments to correct spelling, punctuation, grammar
- Word processor with spell check and/or voice output to provide auditory feedback

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Blind/Low Vision

The following terms are used in an educational context to describe students with visual disabilities:

- "Totally blind" students learn via Braille or other non-visual media.
- "Legally blind" students have less than 20/200 vision in the more functional eye or a very limited field of vision (20 degrees at its widest point).
- "Low vision" refers to students having a severe vision loss in distance and/or near vision. These students may use a combination of vision and other senses to learn and may require adaptations in lighting, print size, and, in some cases, Braille.

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

- Always identify yourself at the beginning of a conversation and tell the student when you exit the room.
- Remember that nonverbal cues depend on good visual acuity. Verbally acknowledge key points in the conversation to facilitate the communication process with students with visual impairments.
- A student may use a guide dog for mobility assistance. Because a guide dog is a working animal, it should not be petted.
- Give clear, concise directions: say "left" or "right," "step up," or "step down." Point out obstacles: for example, "the chair is to your left" or "the stairs start in about three steps."
- When guiding or walking with a student, verbally offer your elbow instead of grabbing his or hers.
- Let the student determine the most ideal seating location so he/she can see, hear and, if possible, touch as much of the presented material as possible.
- Discuss special needs for out-of-class activities (such as field trips) well in advance.
- Assist the student in labeling lab materials for easy identification.
- Always take time to familiarize the student with the layout of the classroom or laboratory and the building, particularly noting the closest exits, restroom facilities, water fountains, public phones, and any emergency equipment. You also need to show the student how to get to your office from the classroom and from his/her point of entry into the building.
- Ask the student if he/she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation and assist in making a plan if necessary.

Accommodations (may include):

- Reading aloud materials from overheads, blackboards or handouts
- Verbal description of class activity, such as when a show of hands is requested, stating how many hands were raised
- Use of tape recorders, laptop computers or slates and styluses for note taking
- A lab assistant - usually authorized and arranged through ASC
- Reading lists and syllabi available in advance to permit time for transfer to alternate formats. It takes at least six weeks for Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic record a text.
- Use of black print on white paper to allow for maximum contrast
- Advanced notice of class schedule and/or room changes
- Adapted computer with features such as, large print, speech synthesizer and Braille printer output (available in Memorial Library)
- Alternative test formats such as taped, large print or Braille; use of readers, scribes, tape recorded responses, extended time, adapted computer or closed circuit TV
- Extra time to complete tests when adaptive technology or a reader/scribe is required

- Class assignments available in electronic format, such as e-mail, to allow access by computers equipped with voice synthesizers or Braille output devices
- Adaptive lab equipment (e.g., talking thermometers and calculators, light probes, and tactile timers)
- Raised line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials
- Videos with audio description

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Brain Injuries

Although the most common traumatic brain injuries are accident-related, brain injury may also be caused by insufficient oxygen, stroke, poisoning, or infection. Brain injury is one of the fastest growing types of disabilities among 15- to 28-year olds.

Characteristics

Manifestations of brain injuries are highly individual and thus can affect students very differently. Depending on the area(s) of the brain affected by the injury, a student may demonstrate difficulties with:

- Organizing thoughts, cause-effect relationships, and problem solving
- Processing information and word retrieval
- Generalizing and integrating skills
- Social interactions, judgment
- Memory
- Balance or coordination
- Communication and speech
- Processing Speed

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

Brain injury can cause physical, cognitive, behavioral, and/or personality changes:

- Recovery may be inconsistent. A student might take one step forward, two back, do nothing for a while and then unexpectedly make a series of gains.
- Changes may impact the student in the short term or permanently.
- Effective teaching strategies include providing opportunities for learning using visual, auditory and hands-on approaches.
- Ask the student if he or she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation and assist in making arrangements if necessary.

Accommodations (may include):

- Tape recorders and/or laptop computers
- Copies of classmate's and/or instructor's notes or overheads
- Extended time for exams
- Exams in a quiet, distraction-free environment
- Frequent breaks allowed during exam; exam given by page or by section
- Clear arrangement of test items on paper
- Calculator, spellchecker, thesaurus, reader, and/or scribe during exams
- Use of blank card or paper to assist in reading
- Extended time to complete assignments
- Taped texts and classroom materials
- Use of handouts and visual aids
- Word processor with spell check and/or voice output to provide auditory feedback
- Instructions or demonstrations presented in more than one way
- Concise oral instructions

- Syllabus provided before the start of the course

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Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing require different accommodations depending on several factors, including the degree of hearing loss, the age of onset, and the type of language or communication system they use. They may use a variety of communication methods, including lip-reading, cued speech, signed English and/or American Sign Language.

Characteristics:

Deaf and hard of hearing students may:

- be skilled lip readers, but many are not; only 30 to 40 percent of spoken English is distinguishable on the mouth and lips under the best of conditions
- also have difficulties with speech, reading and writing skills, given the close relationship between language development and hearing
- use speech, lip-reading, hearing aids and/or amplification systems to enhance oral communication
- be members of a distinct linguistic and cultural group; as a cultural group, they may have their own values, social norms and traditions use American Sign Language as their first language, with English as their second language

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

- American Sign Language (ASL) is not equivalent to English; it is a visual language having its own syntax and grammatical structure.
- Look directly at the student during a conversation, even when an interpreter is present, and speak in natural tones.
- Make sure you have the student's attention before speaking. A light touch on the shoulder, wave or other visual signal will help.
- Recognize the processing time the interpreter takes to translate a message from its original language into another language; the student may need more time to receive information, ask questions and/or offer comments.

Accommodations (may include):

- Providing seating that allows a clear view of the instructor, the blackboard, and if relevant, the interpreter
- Ensuring an unobstructed view of the speaker's face and mouth
- Providing written supplement to oral instructions, assignments, and directions
- Providing handouts in advance so the student can watch the interpreter rather than read or copy new material at the same time
- Using visual aids whenever possible, including captioned versions of videos and films
- Using a small spotlight to allow view of the interpreter while showing films and slides
- Repeating questions and comments from other students
- Providing note taker for class lectures so the student can watch the interpreter
- Testing accommodations may include: extended time, separate place, access to word processor, use of interpreter for directions
- Providing unfamiliar vocabulary in written form, on the blackboard, or in a handout
- Allowing the use of electronic mail, Fax, or word processor for discussions with the instructor
- Providing computerized note taking or Real Time Captioning
- Installing visual warning system for building emergencies

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Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities are neurologically based and may interfere with the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical skills. They affect the manner in which individuals with average or above average intellectual abilities process and/or express information. A learning disability may be characterized by a marked discrepancy between intellectual potential and academic achievement resulting from difficulties with processing information. The effects may change depending upon the learning demands and environments and may manifest in a single academic area or impact performance across a variety of subject areas and disciplines. The impact of learning disabilities can be decreased by instructional interventions, the use of compensatory strategies, and in some cases remediation.

Characteristics:

Difficulties may be seen in one or more of the following areas:

- oral and/or written expression
- reading comprehension and basic reading skills
- problem solving
- ability to listen selectively during lectures, resulting in problems with note taking
- mathematical calculation and reasoning
- interpreting social cues
- time management
- organization of tasks, such as in written work and/or essay questions
- following directions and concentrating

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

Instructors who use a variety of instructional modes will enhance learning for students with learning disabilities. A multisensory approach to teaching, utilizing auditory, visual, or experiential presentation, will increase the ability of students with different strengths to benefit from instruction.

Accommodations (may include):

- Tape recorders and/or laptop computers
- Copies of classmate's and/or instructor's notes or overheads
- Extended time for exams
- Exams in a quiet, distraction-free environment
- Frequent breaks allowed during exam; exam given by page or by section
- Clear arrangement of test items on paper
- Calculator, spellchecker, thesaurus, reader, and/or scribe during exams
- Use of blank card or paper to assist in reading
- Taped texts and classroom materials
- Use of handouts and visual aids
- Extended time for in class assignments to correct spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar
- Word processor with spell check and/or voice output to provide auditory feedback
- Concise oral instructions
- Instructions or demonstrations presented in more than one way
- Syllabus provided before the start of the course

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Physical Disabilities

A variety of physical disabilities result from congenital conditions, accidents, or progressive neuromuscular diseases. These disabilities may include conditions such as spinal cord injury (paraplegia or quadriplegia), cerebral palsy, spina bifida, amputation, muscular dystrophy, cardiac conditions, cystic fibrosis, paralysis, polio/post polio, and stroke.

Characteristics:

Are highly individual; the same diagnosis can affect students very differently.

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

- When talking with a person who uses a wheelchair, try to converse at eye level; sit down if a chair is available.
- Make sure the classroom layout is accessible and free from obstructions.
- If a course is taught in a laboratory setting, provide an accessible workstation. Consult with the student for specific requirements, then with ASC
- If additional assistance or equipment is needed.
- If a student also has a communication disability, take time to understand the person. Repeat what you understand, and when you don't understand, say so.
- Ask before giving assistance, and wait for a response. Listen to any instructions the student may give; the student knows the safest and most efficient way to accomplish the task at hand.
- Let the student set the pace when walking or talking.
- A wheelchair is part of a student's personal space; do not lean on, touch, or push the chair, unless asked.
- When field trips are a part of course requirements, make sure accessible transportation is available.
- Ask the student if he or she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation, and assist in making a plan if necessary.

Accommodations (may include):

- Accessible location for the classroom and place for faculty to meet with student
- Accessible seating in classrooms
- Note takers, tape recorders, laptop computers or copies of instructor and/or classmate's notes
- Adaptive computer equipment/software: voice activated word processing, word prediction, keyboard and/or mouse modification. A computer equipped with most of these devices is available in Memorial Library.
- Test accommodations: extended time, separate location, scribes, access to adapted computers
- Some flexibility with deadlines if assignments require access to community resources
- Adjustable lab or drafting tables
- Lab assistant or classroom aide— usually authorized and arranged through ASC
- Accessible parking in close proximity to the building
- Activities that allow the student to participate within his or her physical capabilities, yet still meet course objectives
- Taped texts
- Advance planning for field trips to ensure accessibility

Psychiatric Disabilities

Psychiatric disabilities refer to a wide range of behavioral and/or psychological problems characterized by anxiety, mood swings, depression, and/or a compromised assessment of reality. These behaviors persist over time; they are not in response to a particular event. Although many individuals with psychiatric disabilities are stabilized using medications and/or psychotherapy, their behavior and affect may still cycle. Some students receive therapy from the Counseling Center; others are working with practitioners in the community.

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

- Students with psychiatric disabilities may not be comfortable disclosing the specifics of their disability.
- Instructors can help these students by providing an understanding and accepting environment in the classroom, which will encourage them to request the accommodations they need to succeed.
- If a student does disclose, be willing to discuss how the disability affects him or her academically and what accommodations would be helpful.
- With treatment and support, many students with psychiatric disabilities are able to manage their mental health and benefit from college classes.
- If students seem to need counseling for disability-related issues, encourage them to discuss their problems with someone in the Counseling Center or the ASC. Maintaining a clear, distinct separation of roles between instructor and counselor is critical for this population.
- Sometimes students may need to check their perceptions of a situation or information you have presented in class to be sure they are on the right track.
- Sequential memory tasks, such as spelling, math, and step-by-step instructions may be more easily understood by breaking up the tasks into smaller ones.
- Drowsiness, fatigue, memory loss, and decreased response time may result from prescription medications.
- Feel free to consult with the ASC if you have any questions or need assistance.

Accommodations (may include):

- Extended time for exams
- Quiet, distraction-free testing area
- Exams divided into segments with rest breaks
- Note takers, readers, or tape recorders in class
- Use of a computer or scribe for essay tests
- Extensions, incompletes, or late withdrawals in the event of prolonged illness
- Some flexibility in the attendance requirements in case of health-related absences
- Modification of seating arrangement (near the door or at the back of the classroom)
- Beverages allowed in class due to medications which may cause extreme thirst
- Referral to the ASC for assistance with time management and study skills

Speech and Language Disabilities

Speech and language disabilities may result from hearing loss, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, and/or physical conditions. There may be a range of difficulties from problems with articulation or voice strength to complete absence of voice. Included are difficulties in projection, fluency problems, such as stuttering and stammering, and in articulating particular words or terms.

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

- Give students opportunity—but do not compel speaking in class. Ask students for a cue they can use if they wish to speak.
- Permit students time to speak without unsolicited aid in filling in the gaps in their speech.
- Do not be reluctant to ask students to repeat a statement.
- Address students naturally. Do not assume that they cannot hear or comprehend.
- Patience is the most effective strategy in teaching students with speech disabilities.

Accommodations (may include):

- Modifications of assignments such as one-to-one presentation or use of a computer with voice synthesizer
- Alternative assignment for oral class reports
- Course substitutions

Other Disabilities

Other disabilities include conditions affecting one or more of the body's systems. These include respiratory, immunological, neurological, and circulatory systems.

Examples:

Cancer, Chemical dependency, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Diabetes, Epilepsy/Seizure disorder, Epstein Barr virus, Fibromyalgia, HIV+/AIDS, Lupus Erythematosus, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, Multiple Sclerosis, Renal Disease

Considerations and Instructional Strategies:

- The condition of a student with a systemic disability may fluctuate or deteriorate over time, causing the need for and type of accommodation to vary.
- Fatigue may be a significant factor in the student's ability to complete required tasks within regular time limits.
- Some of these conditions will cause the student to exceed the college's attendance policy. A reasonable accommodation should reflect the nature of the class requirements and the arrangements initiated by the student for completing the assignments. If you need assistance or guidance in determining a reasonable standard of accommodation, consult with ASC.
- A student may need to leave the classroom early and unexpectedly; the student should be held accountable for missed instruction.
- Ask the student if he or she will need assistance during an emergency evacuation and assist in making a plan if necessary.

Accommodations:

Similar to those for other disabilities, depending upon the student's particular condition, and may include:

- Conveniently located parking
- Extended time for exams
- Enlarged printed materials
- Recorded course materials
- Use of scribes and readers
- Use of computers or other adaptive technology
- Modified course load
- Exam modifications, such as increased frequency, shorter testing sessions, or administering the test by page or by section
- Careful scheduling of the use of cleaning compounds or pesticides

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Appendix**Recent Legal Decisions Which Confirm Previous Legal Interpretations**

A college must provide accommodations. Students are not required to assume the responsibility for securing a necessary accommodation. A college is required to provide reasonable accommodations for a student's known disability so that the student has an equal

opportunity to participate in the courses, activities, or programs. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) ruled that a college may not charge students for necessary accommodations.

Expense of accommodation is not undue hardship. Providing an auxiliary aid or incurring an expense to ensure access would not constitute undue hardship to a college. In determining what constitutes an undue hardship, the OCR views the entire financial resources of a college or university rather than any single department.

The classroom must be accessible. A classroom's location must be changed to provide accessibility for a student with a mobility disability. A college does not need to make every classroom accessible, but must provide for the participation of students with disabilities when "viewed in its entirety."

Extended time is a reasonable accommodation for a student whose documentation specifically supports it. A college is required to ensure that the student is provided additional time to complete tests and/or course work in order to provide an equal opportunity for that student.

The form of an exam must be altered if the testing procedure puts a student with a disability at a disadvantage based on the student's documented disability. There may be an exception when the purpose of the test is to measure a particular skill.

Accommodation must be documented. A college may refuse to grant a student's request for an accommodation that is not specifically recommended in the student's documentation.

If a student with a visual disability is enrolled in a class, all handouts must be provided in an appropriate alternate format and made available to students on the same day they are distributed to students without disabilities.

Diagnostic information is confidential. Faculty/staff do not have the right to access diagnostic information regarding a student's disability. Faculty/staff need only know the accommodations that are necessary to provide an equal opportunity for the student.

An individual faculty member who fails to provide an accommodation to a student with a documented disability may be held personally liable.

Academic freedom does not permit instructors to decide if they will provide special aids and services for students with documented disabilities in the classroom.

A college is not required to provide personal services such as attendant care or personal aids such as wheelchairs or eyeglasses.

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Guidelines: Providing Notice of Availability of Information in Accessible Formats

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that any Berry College publication describing a program or an event, regardless where produced, **must include** a statement announcing the availability of the publication in an alternate format and the opportunity to request accommodations.

All general distribution memos, publications, and flyers describing services, programs, or activities (e.g. brochures, handouts, position announcements) need to include one of the following statements regarding availability in accessible formats:

"This publication will be made available in accessible formats upon request – (phone number)

"This publication is available in accessible formats"

"This publication is available in large print, Braille, or on tape"

Departments are encouraged to use alternate formats (such as Web sites or email) and to state if specific formats already exist (i.e. this handout is available in Braille) and to designate a contact person with a phone number. The statement itself should be easily readable (not small print or italicized).

NOTE: Individuals requesting large print usually need font size 18 or greater. Braille transcription is not presently available on campus, but can be done from a text file for a small fee with advance notice. Specialized formats and tape recorders may need to be used for audio taping materials. Short passages can often be read out loud directly to the person.

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Guidelines: Providing Notice of Opportunity to Request Accommodations Based on Disability

Physical and program access must be provided for all campus events and programs. It is the responsibility of the coordinator of the event to make sure that the location is physically accessible and to be aware of particular limitations of the space (i.e. front and back access to a room, parking nearby). Inviting requests for accommodations by a specific deadline will hopefully avoid surprise requests for accommodations.

Please note that when academic credit is being received by the Berry College student, it is the student's responsibility to request accommodations through the Academic Support Center.

Accommodations typically requested for programs, conferences, and events include preferential seating, portable amplification systems, sign language interpreters, and modified formats of printed materials. When scheduling sign language interpreters, it is preferable to have at least seven working days advance notice. When a formal lecture is given, it is helpful to provide a copy of the speech to the interpreter ahead of time. Sessions lasting more than three hours will usually require at least two interpreters who share responsibilities. A list of qualified interpreters is available upon request from the Academic Support Center (706-233-4080 or 706-236-1707).

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Statements to be included in Printed Materials

Any department producing a publication without a statement giving the opportunity to request accommodations may need to reprint the publication at the expense of the department.

Athletic Events, Music Performances, and Theater:

Individuals attending campus events must be given the opportunity to request accommodations with a specific deadline, as well as the name of a contact person. All announcements, ticket information, brochure, posters, etc., should include one of the following statements in readable non-italicized print:

Requests for accommodations related to disability need to be made to:

Name of contact person
(telephone number)

Requests for sign language interpreters need to be made by: (date)
Others requests for accommodations related to disability need to be made to:

Name of contact person
(Telephone number)

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Large Conferences and Programs:

Registration materials should include a statement as above or specific options as noted below:

Please check any accommodations you may need during the conference:

- sign language interpreter*
- FM amplification system (specific type _____) *
- audio-taped materials
- sighted guides for assistance to/from specific sessions.
- large print *
- Braille*
- other _____ *

*** denoted options which must be included.**

Please ensure that a contact person is noted. If lodging and/or meals are coordinated through the program, an opportunity must be provided to request accommodations related to diet and lodging.

Lodging Accommodations:

No College-sponsored event should be held in an inaccessible location on or off campus. If formal arrangements are made for lodging, the degree of accessibility should be determined and alternatives to inaccessible meeting rooms developed.

Hotels should already have completed the ADA barrier survey and should be aware of the physical access of their facility. You should insure that the hotel understands its responsibility for access and has a procedure for asking if customers have special needs related to disability. If the lodging facility is not dealing directly with registration, the program sponsoring the event needs to coordinate the requests or insure that a lodging representative is named as the contact person for accommodation requests.

In written materials, you may want to include a simple statement (as below) or solicit more specific information on registration forms about shower benches, door widths, dietary restrictions, fire alarms, etc. At minimum you will need to identify a person who is able to confer with the registrant about his/her particular needs and who is prepared to consult with others for assistance in determining what is appropriate.

If you need special accommodations for lodging, contact
(Contact Person) at (phone number)

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Sections of this reference guide have been adapted with permission from Montgomery College's "A Faculty/Staff Guide: Optimizing the Learning Environment for Students with Disabilities", which was funded by a Department of Education, Office of Special Educational and Rehabilitative Service grant.

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