

Disability Resource Center

Changing how we perceive disability.



INFORMATION FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

www.missouristate.edu/disability

Missouri State
UNIVERSITY

Director's note



The Disability Resource Center offers opportunity for faculty and staff, as well as students with disabilities. Our mission and purpose is driven by principles of Universal Design and the Socio-

Political Model of disability. While the Disability Resource Center collaborates with faculty and staff in accommodating current students with disabilities, we also provide support and consultation to assure that curriculum, programs and services are proactively accessible.

Our student population is becoming more and more diverse, including different learning styles, languages, abilities and cultural backgrounds. Individuals do not take in and process information in the same way. Consequently, teaching methods need to reflect our increasingly diverse campus culture. By incorporating universal design into our teaching, programs and services, everyone benefits including those with disabilities.

We are available to assist faculty in reviewing their curricula and suggesting teaching strategies with the goal of creating courses that are more universally accessible, minimizing the need for individual accommodations and maintaining all essential academic elements.

We encourage you to review our new mission, philosophy and grant project information. Join us in our endeavors to create inclusive, equitable, usable learning environments.

— Katheryne Staeger-Wilson, *Director*

Our mission

In conjunction with the Community Principles and overall mission of Missouri State University, the Disability Resource Center appreciates disability as an integral part of the University experience. We are committed to providing equal access and opportunity to all campus programs and services for persons with disabilities. Through collaboration and support of the entire campus community, the Disability Resource Center promotes disability pride, self-determination of the student, and universally accessible design principles, so that everyone has full access to University life.

Core values

- Human variation is natural and vital in the development of dynamic communities.
- Disability is a social/political concept that includes people with a variety of conditions who share common experiences.
- Inclusion and full participation are matters of social justice.
- Design is powerful and profoundly influences our daily lives.
- Universal design is essential for achieving inclusion and full participation.
- Creating usable, equitable, sustainable and inclusive environments is a shared responsibility.



DRC is your resource

Accommodating learning

Due to the design of a University course, program or service, students with disabilities may experience barriers to their full and meaningful participation. If students would like to request an environmental or course adaptation, they may do so by contacting the Disability Resource Center. Students who request these accommodations should do so for every semester they are sought. Students will be asked to provide documentation supporting their disability and the accommodations they have requested. The DRC will create an accommodation memo to be shared with instructors by the student, outlining the



accommodations that should be provided. Accommodations are a cooperative arrangement in which the student plays a vital part; an arrangement between the student, instructor and the DRC. For a full statement of our accommodation policy, procedures and to learn more about our commitment to universal design, please see www.missouristate.edu/disability.

Universal design

Universal Design and the Socio-Political Model of Disability

The mission and purpose of the Disability Resource Center is driven by principles of Universal Design and the Socio-Political Model of disability. Through ongoing exploration and consultation provided to faculty, administration and departments within the University, the Disability Resource Center strives to promote this systemic change. This ideology is best explained by the information below, produced by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).

A new paradigm of service provision and identity

In the past, many disability resource providers built their service and philosophical constructs on the tenets of the medical or rehabilitation model. Although this has been effective in most cases in providing programmatic access and accommodations for individuals one person at a time, it reinforces a "separate but equal" system rather than full inclusion within a community of peers. It does not provide an avenue for the development of self-determination or disability pride for the person receiving services. This model does not take into account that the environment and the curriculum design often limit the full participation of people with disabilities.

*Design creates culture.
Culture shapes values.
Values determine the future.
-Robert Peters*

Conceptual Models of Disabilities

Medical Model (OLD)	Interactional/Socio-Political Model (NEW)
Disability is a deficiency or abnormality	Disability is a difference
Being disabled is negative	Being disabled, in itself, is neutral
Disability resides in the individual	Disability derives from the interaction between the individual and society
The remedy for disability-related problems is cure or normalization of the individual	The remedy for disability-related problems is a change in the interaction between the individual and society
The agent of remedy is the professional	The agent of remedy is the individual, an advocate, or anyone who affects the arrangements between the individual and society

Carol J. Gill, Chicago Institute of Disability Research



Embracing the new constructs

The interactional/socio-political model works extremely well with the principles of Universal Design and Universal Design for Learning. For the first time, true societal, environmental and learning barriers, which historically were not acknowledged by the old medical model, are now placed in their proper perspective. It is the environment as well as societal and institutional beliefs which limit our ability to be successful and spontaneous throughout our individual life journeys.

If you would like new ideas for disability awareness programming or if you would like to explore new curriculum ideas on how disability intersects your field of study, please contact us or see <http://www.missouristate.edu/fctl/disability.htm/>.

Examples of Universal Design (UD) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UD	UDL
Generally benefits more than one group of users (e.g. the curb cut)	Increases accessibility to written materials for multiple users through use of technology
Is usually invisible; is fully integrated into the design	Identifies the essential course content
Provides choices in how people use the environment	Uses a variety of instructional methods when presenting materials
Makes getting around the environment easily understood through communication	Provides clear expectations and feedback

The basics

Universal Design 101

Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. It benefits people of all ages and abilities. Here are some basic suggestions for universal design:

- Think about disability and other diverse groups during the planning stages of your course, program, or event. How welcoming and usable is the environment for everyone who may participate?
- Always outline your agenda at the beginning of your presentation so that participants know what to expect and receive a framework.
- Provide information in order of importance or in chronological order.
- Ensure that all of your materials can be easily provided in alternative formats.
- Post presentation notes, handouts and summary notes on an accessible website so participants can obtain them prior to the lecture.
- Provide visual materials with verbal descriptions.
- Use a teaching methodology that incorporates all learning styles.
- Provide students choices when making assignments/projects.
- Provide feedback and corrective opportunities often.
- Have high expectations for all students.

Project ShIFT

Our Disability Resource Center was one of 25 nationally selected to participate in a U.S. Department of Education grant project. Project ShIFT (Shaping Inclusion through Foundational Transformation) is a three-year, federally funded initiative. The focus of the project is to prepare and support MSU in examining and enhancing disability procedures and instructional practices on our campus. The program will include one member of the Missouri State faculty who will work in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center in creating faculty development projects and to build new skill-sets among instructors. The program will help craft curriculum to be more inclusive. Project ShIFT will focus on the latest research from Disability Studies and then will consider how these concepts could be applied to our practices to facilitate a change in the campus perception of disability. We will host continuing discussions of how new perspectives of disability can inform both curriculum design and explore how course design influences student inclusion. A plan for integrating new design ideas into courses will be developed.

For more information regarding universal design and how you may apply it to your work, please see, <http://www.missouristate.edu/ud/>

FAQS

How do I know what I should do for a student with a disability?

Students with disabilities who experience barriers to their full participation should register with the Disability Resource Center. If the student is registered with our office, the student will be provided an accommodation memo. The student should share the memo with you and discuss the barriers they are experiencing. The memo will outline the accommodations that you will need to provide.

Do field experiences have to be accessible to students with disabilities?

Yes. Equal access must be provided to all components of a class or program even if it is not a required element. This would include labs, field trips, transportation provided and internships.

What should I do if a student requests something that is not on the accommodation memo?

Contact the Disability Resource Center. It is not always possible to predict the precise interaction between a student's disability and a specific course requirement; as a result it may be necessary to amend the memo. In consultation with you and the student, the Disability Resource Center will be able to advise you as to what might be the best environmental/academic adaptation.

*"If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place."
-Margaret Mead*

Should I waive assignments and course requirements for students with disabilities?

No. Students with disabilities should be held to the same standards as any other student. Accommodations should not alter the course or program in any substantive manner.

If I don't feel comfortable providing an accommodation or I feel it alters the nature of the course/program, who should I contact?

The Disability Resource Center. If it can be shown that an accommodation alters or compromises fundamental course or program goals, you have the right to appeal the provision of those accommodations; however, recommended accommodations should be provided until the appeal is resolved. A faculty member should first address his/her concerns through discussions with DRC staff and may initiate a formal appeal of a recommended academic accommodation by submitting a written statement to the Provost, clearly documenting the fundamental academic goals and demonstrating that the recommended accommodation necessarily compromises those goals.

If universally designing my course isn't legally required, how would approaching my work from a universal design perspective make a difference to me?

Our programs and services must be accessible and usable to everyone. However, how you provide equal access is not necessarily defined. Universal design offers a seamless approach to providing access, which allows the University to be in compliance while implementing approaches to design that are more usable by everyone. Incorporating the principles of universal design into a class enhances the accessibility of the curriculum to a variety of diverse learners: minority students, second-language learners, returning students, students with disabilities, etc. While re-envisioning the design of a course may seem overwhelming at first, experience has shown that once faculty members experience the increase in student engagement and learning that is achieved through a universally designed curriculum, there is little desire in returning to the traditional lecture format.

You may find this brochure in an alternative format on our website at www.missouristate.edu/disability or you may contact our office to request a different format.

Could incorporating principles of universal design compromise the integrity of our programs at Missouri State University?

Universal design is not about removing the challenge of a course or degree plan. In fact, a socio-political perspective would take issue with the idea that things need to be easier for people with disabilities to succeed. Reducing the challenge would be contrary to this philosophy. Sometimes people get the idea that proponents of universal design are saying that environments and courses should be designed so that everyone should succeed. This is a misinterpretation. Our goals are the same as the goals of the University. We want to engage all learners in ways that support and increase their fluency with the subject at hand. We want all students to get the full experience.



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