For the faculty and staff of Missouri State University

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

Changing how we perceive disability.

DISABILITY SERVICES
Plaster Student Union, Room 405
901 S. National
Springfield, MO 65897
417-836-4192
417-836-4134 fax
417-836-6792 tty
www.missouristate.edu/disability
Director’s Note
Disability Services 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 Disability Services supports faculty and staff in accommodating current students with disabilities, we also provide support and consultation services 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 members 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 and philosophy and join us in our endeavors — creating usable, inclusive and sustainable learning environments.

~ Katheryne Staeger-Wilson, Director

Mission Statement
In conjunction with the Community Principles and overall mission of Missouri State University, the Office of Disability Services 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, Disability Services promotes disability pride, self-determination of the student, and universally accessible design principles, so that everyone has full access to University life.

Students must initiate a request for services to Disability Services every semester in which accommodations are sought. If eligibility for services and the request for academic accommodations are approved, Disability Services or the Learning Diagnostic Clinic will provide to the student a letter to be shared with instructors outlining the approved accommodations. Accommodations are a cooperative arrangement in which the student plays a vital part; an arrangement between the student, faculty and Disability Services.

For a full statement of policies and procedures, the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities, and the rights and responsibilities of the University and its faculty, see: www.missouristate.edu/disability
EASY TIPS FOR UNIVERSALLY DESIGNED LECTURES, PRESENTATIONS AND PROGRAMS

- If hosting a program or event, be certain to include an accommodation statement on all publications. Contact Disability Services for consultation on an appropriate statement.

- Think about accessibility during the planning stages. Does the environment allow adequate space for wheelchair users, service animals, sign language interpreters or real-time captionists.

- Select printed materials and texts early.

- Be certain that you review the accommodation statement in your syllabus and make certain that all students know they are welcome in your class/program.

- Always outline your agenda at the beginning of the presentation so that participants know what to expect and receive a framework.

- Provide information in order of importance or in chronological order.

- Make certain that amplification systems are provided and used.

- Ensure all multi-media is captioned or that an alternative format is provided.

- Post presentation notes, handouts and summary notes on an accessible web site so participants can obtain them prior to the lecture.

- Provide visual materials with verbal descriptions.

- Describe handouts and overhead visuals.

- PowerPoint slides should be 24-point font with a high contrast background. Fonts should be simple in style such as Times New Roman or Arial.

- Use a teaching methodology that incorporates all learning styles.

- Proactively plan all components of a course or program to be accessible. This would include labs, field experiences, field trips, transportation (if provided for all students) and internship sites.

- Provide feedback and corrective opportunities often.

- Have high expectations for all students.

For more information, please see our web site dedicated to support faculty and staff at
www.missouristate.edu/disability/forfaculty.htm
How do I know what I need to do for a student with a disability?

Students who have a disability should be registered with Disability Services or the Learning Diagnostic Clinic. If the student is registered with our office and approved for accommodations, the student will be provided an accommodation memo at the beginning of each semester that they are to share with you. The memo also outlines the type of accommodations that should be provided to the student.

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

Contact Disability Services for the appropriateness of the request. 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 approved accommodations.

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 required. This would include labs, field trips, transportation provided and internships.

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 for students with disabilities 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, who should I contact?

A faculty member who believes that accommodations recommended by Disability Services or the Learning Diagnostic Clinic can be shown to alter or compromise fundamental course or program goals has 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 Disability Services or the Learning Diagnostic Clinic, 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?

Equal access is required by the law. 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.

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 sociopolitical 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.
Disability Services’ mission and purpose 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, Disability Services 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 Service 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.

**Conceptual Models of Disabilities**

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

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

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

Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration with which you treat others. There are no strict rules when it comes to relating to people with disabilities. However, here are some helpful hints.

General Guidelines

• Ask a person with a disability if he/she needs help before providing assistance.
• Talk directly to the person with a disability, not through the person’s companion or interpreter.
• Refer to a person’s disability only if it is relevant to the conversation. If so, refer to the person first and then the disability. “A man who is blind” is more acceptable than reference to “a blind man,” because it emphasizes the person first.
• Avoid negative descriptions of a person’s disability. For example, “a person who uses a wheelchair” is more appropriate than “a person confined to a wheelchair.” A wheelchair is not confining — it’s liberating!
• Ask for permission before you interact with a person’s guide dog or service animal.

Visual Impairments

• Be descriptive for people with visual impairments. Say, “The computer is about three feet to your left,” rather than, “The computer is over there.”
• When guiding people with visual impairments, offer them your arm rather than grabbing or pushing them.

Learning Disabilities

• Offer directions/instruction both orally and in writing. If asked, read instructions to individuals who have specific learning disabilities.

Mobility Impairments

• Sit or otherwise position yourself at the approximate height of people sitting in wheelchairs when you interact.

Speech Impairments

• Listen carefully. Repeat what you think you understand and then ask the person with a speech impairment to clarify and/or repeat the portion that you did not understand.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

• Face people with hearing impairments so they can see your lips.
• Speak clearly at a normal volume. Speak more loudly only if requested.
• Use paper and pencil if the deaf person does not read lips or if more accurate communication is needed.
• In groups raise hands to be recognized, so the person who is deaf knows who is speaking.
• When using an interpreter, speak directly to the person who is deaf; when an interpreter voices what a deaf person signs, look at the deaf person, not the interpreter.

Psychiatric Impairments

• Provide information in clear, calm and respectful tones.
• Allow opportunities for addressing specific questions.

Source: DO-IT

Missouri State University adheres to a strict nondiscrimination policy and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, veteran status, or on any basis (including, but not limited to, political affiliation and sexual orientation) not related to the applicable educational requirements for students in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the University.

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Plaster Student Union, 405 • 901 South National Avenue • Springfield, MO 65897