

## Section 11

# Eastern Connecticut State University

A Unit of the Connecticut State University System

## Faculty Handbook

### Policies for Students with Disabilities Office of AccessAbility Services

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## **WELCOME**

**Welcome to the Office of AccessAbility Services (OAS)! Our services are designed to meet the unique educational needs of regularly enrolled students with documented permanent and temporary disabilities.**

**The mission of the Office of AccessAbility Services is to achieve equal educational opportunities and full participation for individuals with disabilities by removing barriers that are physical, programmatic, and attitudinal and to prevent the erection of new barriers**

**The purpose of this handbook is to assist faculty and staff at Eastern Connecticut State University in meeting their responsibilities for providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Based on the individual student's documentation, the OAS will determine accommodations required by the student and will arrange appropriate services provided through the office. The OAS staff is available to discuss the accommodations necessary for your specific class and to assist you in providing these accommodations.**

## **From the President**

**In its second century, Eastern Connecticut State University continues its long heritage of achievement and distinguished record of caring for students as individuals. The essence of our mission at ECSU is an unwavering commitment to the values of liberal education. The dedication governs what is taught in the classroom, the environment beyond the classroom, and the ways in which we relate to one another in an academic environment.**

**Our purpose is to promote an academic culture, which enables each student to acquire the knowledge and skills to lead a fulfilling life in the most rapidly changing period in the history of humankind. We believe that the Eastern culture nurtures, stimulates, and rewards learning, that it recognizes undergraduate achievement, and empowers each student to reach full potential.**

**At Eastern, a diverse set of academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate level provides a variety of educational opportunities for students. Quality undergraduate education is the overriding priority. To ensure such quality, the institution builds on its strengths, particularly the strength of a talented and energetic faculty dedicated to effective teaching, which is grounded in research, scholarship, and public service.**

Dr. David G. Carter

(Faculty Handbook, 1997)

## **Disabilities on Campus**

**This section of the handbook will give you a brief overview of some of the major types of disabilities you may encounter. Although non-inclusive, a listing of specific accommodations, which may be required for each disability, is included.**

**The OAS *does not* evaluate or diagnose students with disabilities! Students who are registered with the OAS have been diagnosed by qualified health care professionals in the community. Services provided by Eastern are based on documented testing and conclusions of these health care professionals.**

## **Learning Disabilities**

Students with learning disabilities have processing disorders that affect the manner in which they take in information, organize it, retain it and express knowledge and understanding. Although students with learning disabilities at ECSU have intellectual abilities comparable to other students, they may have serious deficits in reading, spelling, written expression, and/or quantitative reasoning.

### **Accommodations**

- Notetaker
- Extended time for exams
- Extended time for reading/writing assignments
- Tape recorder

## **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**

Students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may have difficulty paying attention to detail, become easily distracted, be disorganized and may become restless. These symptoms can, from time to time, adversely affect a student's ability to function in the academic setting and in his or her life in general.

### **Accommodations**

- Notetaker
- Extended time for exams
- Extended time for reading/writing assignments
- Tape recorder

## **Mobility Impairments**

**Students with mobility impairments have difficulty with ambulating and may use crutches or a wheelchair/scooter. Students may have service animals, which provide support, and/or personal care assistants.**

### **Accommodations**

- **Notetaker**
- **Accessible room for student to meet with teacher if needed**
- **Seating in the front of the classroom (preferential seating)**
- **Service animal**
- **Lab assistant**
- **Tape recorder**
- **Use of laptop for note taking**

## **Blindness/Visual Impairments**

Visual impairments affect the central visual function, color perception, binocular visual function, and vision acuity. There may be students in your class with a visual impairment that will not require any assistance.

### **Accommodations**

- **Notetaker**
- **Reader**
- **Service animal**
- **A cane**
- **Large print handouts/classroom material**
- **Seating in the front of the classroom (preferential seating)**

## **Deafness/Hearing Impairments**

A hearing impairment is any degree of loss of auditory processing. Deafness is an inability to use hearing as a means of communication. A person who has a hearing impairment may or may not be able to read lips and/or speak intelligibly. The mode of communication will differ depending on the level of hearing loss.

### **Accommodations**

- Notetaker
- An interpreter
- FM system (small microphone amplification system)
- Seating in the front of the classroom (preferential seating)

## **Psychological Disorders**

Psychological disorders encompass a wide range of mental health problems and symptoms that can, from time to time, adversely affect a student's ability to function in the academic setting and in his or her life in general. Common diagnoses include depression, serious eating disorders, severe anxiety, bipolar disorder and, less commonly, psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia. Students may or may not be taking medication as part of his or her treatment.

### **Accommodations**

- **Extended time for exams**
- **Tape recorded course materials**
- **Flexibility in attendance requirements in case of health-related absences**

## **Additional Disabilities Covered Under the Laws**

**There are also students attending ECSU who have disabilities that do not fall into the preceding major categories. Appropriate accommodations, based on proper documentation, are also provided to these students.**

- **AIDS**
- **Arthritis**
- **Asthma**
- **Burns**
- **Cancer**
- **Cardiovascular Disorders**
- **Cerebral Palsy**
- **Chronic Pain**
- **Diabetes Mellitus**
- **Epilepsy**
- **Hemophilia**
- **Lupus**
- **Motor Neuron Diseases**
- **Multiple Sclerosis**
- **Muscular Dystrophy**
- **Renal-Kidney Disease**
- **Sickle Cell Anemia**
- **Stroke**
- **Tourette's Syndrome**

## The Laws

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

### **1. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

**IF**

**1) a person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life functions**

**OR**

**has a history of such impairment**

**OR**

**is regarded as having such an impairment**

**AND**

**2) that person meets the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in a college's programs or activities**

**THEN that student must be ensured equal educational opportunity.**

### **2. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

**On July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. It was designed to remove barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities that are available to persons without disabilities.**

**The ADA defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual: i.e. performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, and learning.”**

## **Relevant Case Law Decisions**

### **Personal Liability**

Any faculty member who fails to provide adequate accommodations to a student with a documented disability may be held personally liable.

### **Documented Accommodations**

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

### **Classroom/Teacher Accessibility**

The classroom or teacher's office location must be changed, if necessary, to provide accessibility for a student with mobility impairment.

### **Extended Time**

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

### **Alternate Exam Form**

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

### **Alternate Handout Format**

**If handouts are provided to all students, the instructor must be able to provide the handout in alternate format for students whose disability requires such. All handouts must be made available to the disabled student on the same day they are available to the non-disabled student.**

### **Library Material**

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

### **Testing Accommodations**

**Readers, Proctors, Scribes, or the use of adaptive equipment must be provided for a student with a documented disability. (The OAS is available to arrange the accommodations.)**

## **Faculty Responsibility**

### **If Notified in Writing**

Faculty/staff members are responsible for working with the OAS in order to provide adequate accommodations in a reasonable and timely manner. Faculty/staff should meet with students who provide a letter (from OAS) requesting accommodations to establish the means of providing accommodations.

### **If Not Notified in Writing**

If the student has requested accommodations and the faculty/staff member has not been notified in writing by the OAS, the faculty/staff member should request a letter of accommodation or contact the OAS him/her self to verify the accommodation. In case of a mobility impairment where the accommodation is apparent, you may accommodate the student while awaiting official notification.

### **If Questioning the Appropriateness of Accommodation**

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

### **Syllabus Statement for Students With Disabilities**

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

**“If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of AccessAbility Services at 465-5573. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Office of AccessAbility as soon as possible. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from the Office of AccessAbility services. Your cooperation is appreciated.”**

## **Tips for Disability Awareness**

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

### **Appropriate Language**

- **Persons with disabilities are to be recognized as people first, then the disability; emphasizes the person and not the disability.**
- **It is appropriate to use the word disability when referring to someone who has a physical, mental, emotional, sensory, or learning impairment.**
- **Avoid terms such as “wheelchair bound”. The person is not “wheelchair bound”. He/she has a specific disability that requires him/her to use a wheelchair.**

### **Appropriate Interaction**

- **It is acceptable to shake hands with someone with limited hand movement.**
- **Avoid patronizing people who use wheelchairs by patting their shoulders or their head. Do not touch their wheelchair. That is part of their personal space.**
- **Offer assistance with sensitivity and respect. Do not insist if they decline your offer.**
- **If the person has a disability, talk directly to the person; not to their interpreter.**
- **If you are uncertain of what a person with a speech impediment is saying, it is not rude to ask them to repeat themselves. Listen attentively, and watch for body gestures.**

## **Confidentiality**

**The confidentiality of the student and his or her disability is of the utmost importance. There are many “hidden” disabilities and the student has no obligation to reveal the nature of his/her disability to anyone, including faculty/staff. Respect for the student’s wishes and protection of confidentiality must be maintained.**

**A student’s record and diagnosis is confidential and therefore not accessible to faculty/staff. While maintaining confidentiality, the OAS and faculty share the responsibility for providing appropriate accommodations, for the student, which are also reasonable accommodations for the faculty.**

## **Reporting Problems**

### **Faculty/Staff**

If you have concerns/problems related to a student's participation in class and you feel it may be due to his/her disability, please contact the OAS immediately.

### **Student Resolution of Service Delivery Problems**

It is fair to say that even with the best efforts of everyone involved with a student's service delivery at ECSU, a problem may occur. Experience has shown that most problems arise because of a misunderstanding or miscommunication. In these cases clarification can be a quick and efficient/appropriate way for students to deal with issues:

1. Start by discussing the problem with the person (faculty/staff) involved.
2. If the matter is still unresolved, contact the AccessAbility Coordinator.
3. If the situation is still unresolved, contact the Vice President of Student Affairs.

Throughout any of these procedures students should be treated with respect, receive a timely response, and have their issues dealt with in a confidential manner (unless otherwise indicated). Disability-related law and University policy prohibit retaliation in any form against persons who file complaints. The University expects students to bring up problems early, give clear and detailed information and be respectful of those people who are working with them. An individual who believes he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability should contact the AccessAbility Services Coordinator.

## **Student Workers**

### **Notetaker**

Students with disabilities may require assistance with note-taking to compensate for their specific disability. The notetaker will identify himself or herself to the professor. The notetaker is expected to have a good attitude and to come to class prepared.

### **Notetakers Responsibility**

- ✓ **Provide a quality set of notes that is:**
  - Legible and timely in delivery**
  - Thorough in content and clearly organized**
- ✓ **Commit to attending class**
- ✓ **Get notes to student by:**
  - Dropping off at OAS**
  - Sending by E mail**
- ✓ **Notes should be available to student within 24 hours of the class session**

### **Discrepancies**

**Should you have concerns with the notetaker, please contact the OAS immediately.**