



UGA Student Affairs

Disability Resource Center

Teaching Students with Disabilities

- UGA Policy:** The University of Georgia seeks to provide students with disabilities the opportunity to fully participate in educational programs and services. In keeping with this philosophy, it is University policy that students with documented disabilities receive reasonable accommodations through access to classroom information.
- Law:** The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandate that universities make reasonable accommodations in programs and activities to provide equal access to qualified persons with disabilities. A qualified person with a disability is one who can satisfy “the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the recipient’s educational program or activity.”
- Disabilities:** Types of disabilities commonly found among university students are both visible and hidden. Disabilities can be physical, cognitive, or psychological. Examples include the following: acquired brain injuries, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, blind and low vision, chronic illnesses, deaf and hard of hearing, learning disabilities, mobility impairments, and psychological disorders.
- Academics:** The DRC provides faculty with recommendations regarding the appropriate provision of academic adjustments for students in the classroom. While professors are expected to make reasonable accommodations, they are never asked to lower academic standards or provide adjustments that are excessive or contradictory to stated course objectives. If appropriate academic adjustments are not provided by faculty, many students with disabilities will be at an academic disadvantage.
- Accommodations:** Academic accommodations may entail assisting students in finding notetakers or arranging testing accommodations. More sophisticated requests might involve converting a textbook into alternative media or installing adaptive software in a computer lab. The accommodations needed will vary according to the students’ individual needs.
- Support:** The DRC recognizes that faculty may have limited time and resources to adequately provide students with requested accommodations. If professors need assistance, want additional information on how to accommodate students with disabilities, or require consultation on teaching and testing techniques, please contact a disability specialist at 542-8719. Additional information is also available on the DRC web site at www.drc.uga.edu.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Will I need to change the way I teach my course to accommodate students with disabilities?

Not usually. Most students do not need any change in teaching style; however, some students need adjustments to access a course. For example, instructors may be asked to verbalize when writing on the board to accommodate a student with a visual impairment.

2. How does the DRC decide if a student qualifies for academic accommodations?

The student is responsible for contacting the DRC and providing documentation of a disability. The staff uses federal regulations as a guide to determine what academic accommodations the student is eligible to receive in the classroom. Academic accommodations are not provided to ensure a student's academic success, but are provided to give the student equal opportunity during their academic career at The University of Georgia.

3. Do I have to change grades or course requirements for students who have disabilities?

The DRC never asks faculty to lower grading standards. However, reasonable alternatives for course requirements may be requested based on a particular student's disability. For example, in a lab where students are required to work individually, a student who has limited hand use may require a lab assistant to aid in manual dexterity.

4. What should I do if I have questions regarding a student's requested accommodations?

Professional staff at the DRC are available to discuss any questions or concerns that faculty may have about requested accommodations. Feel free to contact a specialist or the director at 542-8719.

5. What if a student requests an accommodation but does not have a letter of support from the DRC?

The DRC is a resource for you. Please feel free to refer students to the DRC and ask that they obtain a letter documenting their disabilities and needed accommodations.

6. What if I suspect a student has a learning disability or a psychological disability?

First, talk to the student about your concerns. If the student is agreeable, refer the student to the DRC. The staff will be happy to assist the student in identifying an appropriate agency for assessment or evaluation.

7. What happens if my classroom is not architecturally accessible?

The DRC negotiates to have course sections moved to accessible locations for students with mobility impairments registered with our office.

8. Does the DRC have to administer all tests that require accommodations?

No. The DRC encourages professors and instructors to provide testing accommodations within the classroom or department. If you have any questions about the best way to provide an accommodation, do not hesitate to contact the disability testing specialist at 542-7721.