



Dos and Don'ts For Instructors Providing Accommodations to Students with Disabilities



Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confer with the student about how the approved accommodations will work within the structure of the given course. Ideally this conversation will be started by the student but instructors are encouraged to provide a safe and supportive space for discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make assumptions about a student's ability to work in a particular field. Concerns that students may not be able to succeed are often based on fears and assumptions, not facts. Remember too, that employers are also required to comply with the ADA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat students with disabilities with the same courtesies you would afford to other students and hold them to the same academic standards and expectations as any other student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in philosophical debates about "fairness" to other, nondisabled students, or whether providing accommodations somehow violates your academic freedom. Congress has determined how society should address equal access to education by passing federal civil rights statutes protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, without adversely impacting those without disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the privacy of students with disabilities. While they must disclose disability to a designated official at your college in order to access accommodations, this does not require disclosure to everyone. Treat disability information which has been disclosed to you as confidential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide not to provide reasonable accommodations, or the academic adjustments which have been approved by the institution's designee. You may subject your institution or yourself to liability. Refuse to provide accommodations until you have personally evaluated a student's documentation of disability. Eligibility for services under the ADA is the job of the SSD staff, not the instructor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist students in following the university's policies, such as requirements that all requests for accommodation be lodged with the SSD office and not individual faculty members alone. This protects students, faculty and the institution by ensuring consistency and takes much of the burden off individual faculty members, who are often ill-equipped to determine whether an accommodation is appropriate or how to provide it. Violations have been found in cases where faculty members have not followed institutional policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refuse to permit students to tape record lectures as an accommodation. Policies which permit instructors to refuse the use of tape recorders, without providing for their use by students with disabilities, are legally insufficient. Refuse to provide copies of handouts if these accommodations have been determined to be appropriate for a student. Refuse to provide extended time for tests on the mistaken assumption that doing so would require that all students be given additional time.

Visit the Faculty/Staff section of the SSD website to learn more about providing accommodations.