

A Guide for Faculty:

Working with Students with Disabilities

**Center for Academic
Support and Advising
Hampshire College
Amherst, MA 01002**

As faculty and staff, your efforts are an important contribution to the success that students with disabilities experience on this campus. We hope this handbook supports you in your work.

We discuss various disabilities, the accommodations that are used by students, and ways that you, as an instructor and adviser, can help. This handbook also explains the support services available, how students gain access to those services, and the procedures to use when working with students with disabilities. Students, faculty, the disabilities services staff, and other offices of the college share responsibility for educating students with disabilities.

As disabilities services coordinators, we have formal responsibility for ensuring that students receive the accommodations appropriate to their needs. More often, we are involved in conversations with students, faculty and staff about ways to support students with disabilities as they plan for and undertake the tasks and responsibilities that will lead to a rewarding and successful undergraduate experience. Much of our work involves working with students to identify appropriate resources and strategies.

Please keep this handbook as a ready reference. We look forward to your comments, inquiries, and suggestions. Please keep in mind that we are happy to respond to questions and are available to meet with you and the student.

For more information, contact:

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Psychological Disabilities
Services Coordinator
CASA X 5722
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Introduction

The number of students with disabilities is growing in American higher education. According to the American Council on Education's [College Freshmen with Disabilities: A Biennial Statistical Profile](#) (2001), 6.4% of students entering four-year colleges disclose a disability. Among these students, the number identifying a learning disability has risen from 16% of the total in 1988 to 40% in 2000. At Hampshire about 4-5% of our entering students volunteer documentation identifying a disability.

Some of our most creative and independent thinkers also have learning and/or attentional disabilities. Many are attracted to Hampshire because of our educational approach—individually designed curricula, discussion-based classes, written evaluations

rather than letter grades, mentoring relationships with faculty. However, Hampshire's attractive features can present new challenges. Students with language-based disabilities are frequently daunted by the emphasis on writing research papers. The flexibility of our approach, especially regarding deadlines, often tests students' skills in self-organization and time management. The opportunity and necessity to negotiate one's independent educational path can be stressful for individuals with limited social skills. As for all students and especially for students with disabilities, building on strengths and addressing weaknesses is most productive. The most successful students with disabilities demonstrate an awareness of their disability, the willingness to take advantage of available supports, and a strong capacity for self-advocacy.

The Law

Post-secondary responsibilities to individuals with disabilities are mandated by federal laws, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Both address the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. Hampshire College may not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students with disabilities. Students who have voluntarily disclosed that they have a disability (self-identified), provided documentation of that disability, and requested reasonable accommodations are entitled to receive approved modifications of programs, appropriate academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids that enable them to participate in and benefit from all of the educational programs and activities of the college.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states in part:

“No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs, activities of a public or private entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.”

A “qualified person with a disability” is defined as one:

“who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity.” (Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

Under the ADA, a person with a disability is defined as

“any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.” Learning is considered a major life activity.

Based on the degree of impairment, the following conditions may be considered disabilities. This list is not exclusive:

muscular dystrophy epilepsy specific learning disability

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| orthopedic/mobility impairment | cerebral palsy | multiple sclerosis |
| traumatic brain injury | diabetes | speech/language impairment |
| deafness/hearing impairment | blindness/visual impairment | psychological disability |
| | some forms of chronic illness | |

What is reasonable accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation:

- is any modification or adjustment that will allow a student with a disability to participate in a program or have the same rights and privileges as students without disabilities to benefit from all educational programs and activities.
- makes it possible for a student with disabilities to fully engage in the educational program and for an instructor to fairly evaluate the student’s understanding of the material without interference from the disability.
- includes specific recommendations of strategies, technology, or aids needed to accommodate the disabling condition without compromising the integrity of the academic program.
- “levels the playing field” for students with disabilities without watering down curricula. Students have the right to fail or succeed.

Determination of services is provided on a case-by-case basis after a review of the documentation by the appropriate disabilities services coordinator. Documentation is the report written by a qualified specialist (e.g., physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, audiologist, etc.) that describes the disability or condition and which may provide recommendations for accommodations and strategies. Students are encouraged to identify themselves to instructors and to the services coordinator. Some students choose to remain anonymous in order to maintain confidentiality, which is their right.

Reasonable accommodation is not intended to compromise academic standards. Students with disabilities must meet the same admissions and graduation requirements as all other students. Faculty members, whether in the role of adviser, instructor, or committee member, are encouraged to participate in discussions and/or ask questions about the accommodations process. A team approach to addressing student needs is often most effective.

Every day faculty are challenged to be creative in meeting the needs of all students. Good teaching practices - such as using a multi-sensory approach in presentations, supplementing class discussions with handouts, clearly organizing and presenting course, class, and divisional objectives, and being readily available for student conferences - optimize learning for all students. For students with disabilities, they are essential.

Hampshire College's Policies and Procedures

In accordance with the law and with accepted practices, Hampshire has developed the following policies and procedures for students with disabilities as published in the student handbook, Non Satis, Non Scire, Fall, 2005:

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Hampshire College offers services on an individual basis to students with documented disabilities. Hampshire College recognizes its obligation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities so they may participate as fully as possible in the College's academic programs. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, sensory impairments, mobility impairments, chronic illnesses, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, and psychological disabilities. Two staff members in the Center for Academic Support and Advising (CASA) share responsibility for the coordination and provision of services to students with disabilities: Anne Downes, Associate Dean of Advising (psychological disabilities), may be reached at 413-559-5722 or via email, adownes@hampshire.edu. Joel Dansky, Disabilities Services Coordinator (physical and learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders), may be reached at 413-559-5423 or via email jdansky@hampshire.edu.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Hampshire neither imposes accommodations on students nor preempts his or her responsibility as a legal and social adult, to request appropriate accommodations and make sure those needs are met. The student must take the lead in completing the disabilities form available on the Hampshire College website and from the Center for Academic Support and Advising (CASA) (see below). Students are expected to work in concert with the appropriate office to specify, arrange and follow through on accommodations. Should problems occur, students should alert the college in a timely fashion so that together we can help solve them.

DISABILITY CERTIFICATION/REQUEST FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

The [Disability Registration Form/Request for Accommodations and Disability Certification Forms](http://hampshire.edu/cms/index.php?=3369) can be obtained from the Disabilities Services Coordinators or downloaded from the Disabilities Services web page (<http://hampshire.edu/cms/index.php?=3369>). You must also provide documentation for your disability. The documentation must indicate the credentials of the evaluator or treating professional and should include a diagnosis, the limitations or impairments imposed by the disability, and recommendations for academic or physical accommodations due to the disability. For individuals with learning disabilities, the documentation must provide a complete educational evaluation conducted by a qualified psycho-educational diagnostician or licensed psychologist and should have been administered within three years of admission to Hampshire College. For individuals with Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, a similar report or a letter from a treating physician or psychiatrist is required. For psychological concerns, students need to submit a diagnosis made by a licensed mental health professional or neurologist involved with the student's care, accompanied by a letter that states what accommodations will likely be needed.

Documentation and specific requests for accommodation should be sent to Joel Dansky, Disabilities Services Coordinator (learning and physical disabilities, attention deficit disorders) or Anne Downes (psychological disabilities) at Hampshire College, 893 West Street, CASA Box AC, Amherst MA 01002-5001.

EVALUATIONS

Hampshire does not provide psycho-educational evaluations for students. We do have a list of local practitioners who are qualified to conduct such evaluations at the student's expense.

REVIEW OF REQUESTS

All requests for accommodations will be assessed by the Center for Academic Support and Advising (CASA), which also may review requests with appropriate College administrators and/or faculty to determine the appropriateness and/or feasibility of the requested accommodations. CASA also may request further information from you and/or your treating professional and may make its own recommendations for alternative accommodations which may be more appropriate to address your individual circumstances. You will be notified by CASA when your request is approved or denied.

REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AT THE FIVE COLLEGES

Hampshire students frequently take courses at the other four colleges in the Five College Consortium. Requests for accommodations in courses in other colleges must be made through the appropriate disability services coordinator at Hampshire, who will forward your

request to their counterpart at the other college. The final decision regarding the appropriateness or feasibility of such a request for accommodation rests with the disabilities services administrator at the other campus.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The decision to disclose a disability to the College is wholly voluntary. However, you may not receive an accommodation from the College without such disclosure and/or without providing appropriate supporting information and documentation. The information provided by you will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed by the College only as necessary for it to assess and/or implement your requested services or accommodations. Students are legally considered to be adults. Communication of confidential information with parents or professionals regarding disabilities must be authorized by the student.

TRANSPORTATION

The disabilities services coordinator facilitates applications for off-campus paratransit (van) services provided by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority and by the Five Colleges for students with mobility impairments that prevent them from using Five College bus transportation. If you need a handicapped-parking permit, please contact Disability Services (Joel Dansky, X5423).

HOUSING

Hampshire has several housing units specially equipped for students with physical disabilities. If you need such accommodations please indicate that in your Request for Accommodations.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND STUDY SKILLS

Hampshire has several computers equipped with text-to speech, speech-to-text, and graphic organizing programs to assist students with learning disabilities. The Disabilities Services Coordinator is available to work with students, individually or in small groups, who have problems with organization, time management, or study skills. These services are open to all students, although first priority for use of assistive technologies and study skills services is given to students with documented learning disabilities and/or AD/HD.

TTYS (TELETYPEWRITERS)

Several offices on campus have TTY service is available: The switchboard (incoming calls only), 413-559-6097, Student Affairs, 413-559-4556, and Admissions, 413-559-6150. There is a TTY for public use in the library.

AUXILIARY AIDS

Hampshire College believes that its responsibility to ensure the availability of necessary auxiliary aids ordinarily can be met by assisting disabled students to obtain such aids from governmental units, such as the state vocational rehabilitation agencies, through the student's health insurance, or from private charitable organizations. Accordingly, students with disabilities will be expected to exercise reasonable self-help in obtaining and maintaining funding from outside sources for required aids. In the event that a student with a documented disability is turned down by outside agencies for auxiliary aids that the college has determined are necessary to give the student an equal opportunity to obtain the same educational benefit from the course or courses in which the student seeks to enroll as may be obtained by a student without disabilities, then the college will take whatever action is necessary and reasonable to fulfill its obligations to ensure that the student is not denied the right to participate in any such class or classes due to the absence of educationally necessary aids.

To ensure the availability of necessary aids at the start of any particular semester, a student with a disability who believes that he or she will need an auxiliary aid to participate in a course or courses offered by Hampshire College must notify the Disabilities Services Coordinator of the need at least four weeks before the first day of classes for that term. Such notice is required in order to give the student and the college a reasonable period of time to evaluate whether the requested aid is necessary to provide the student with an equal opportunity to benefit from the college's educational programs, to identify sources for purchasing, leasing or hiring any necessary aid, and, if possible, to obtain funding for required aids from appropriate governmental or other agencies.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Hampshire College and the Office of Disability Services recognize the right of students to file a grievance if they believe they have been denied equal access to the college's academic programs, resources or other services because of a disability. In order to establish the basis for such a grievance, students must have registered with the Office of Disability Services and provide documentation of their disability.

The college always encourages students to enlist the aid and intervention of the Disability Services Coordinators in order to resolve complaints informally. If informal procedures do not satisfactorily address the student's concerns, she/he may file a written grievance. The written grievance should include the student's identifying information, a detailed account of the way in which the student believes the college has denied equal access to the student with reference to the relevant legislation and college policies, and the steps that the student has already taken in an attempt to resolve the problem.

The formal grievance shall be presented to the appropriate Disabilities Services Coordinator who shall be charged with investigating such complaints and convening meetings with the parties cited in an attempt to resolve the grievance. Within ten working days after the filing of the grievance, the Disabilities Services Coordinator will make recommendations to the student and all other parties involved.

If that resolution is unacceptable to the student or to the other principals in the grievance, either party may then appeal to the Dean of the College. The Dean shall consult with the college's ADA Compliance Officer to ascertain if violations of relevant federal or state laws have occurred. The Dean of the College shall review all of the documents pertaining to the case and convene such meetings as required to resolve the complaint. If no consensual resolution is reached, the grievance will be referred to the President of the College who shall, within ten working days, render a decision that will be binding on all parties to the grievance. The college recognizes the right of students to file grievances with the U.S. Office of Civil Rights if they believe that their rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 have been violated.

If one of the disabilities services coordinators is the subject of the grievance, the complaint should be filed directly with the Dean of the College, who will attempt to reach an informal resolution and /or investigate the grievance as in paragraph three above.

All information regarding such grievances is considered confidential. The college reserves the right to consult with legal counsel, relevant faculty or staff, and/or experts in the field of disability services in order to obtain information or advice regarding the presenting problem. Any individual consulted agrees to be bound by the rules governing disclosure of confidential information.

Responsibilities

Student responsibilities include:

- voluntarily identifying disability-related needs to the appropriate office/program.
- providing current and complete documentation of the disability to the disabilities services coordinator.
- formally requesting needed accommodations and services in a timely manner.
- notifying the disabilities services provider of any changes or concerns in needed services or accommodations.
- abiding by the policies and procedures for students at Hampshire College.
- using services responsibly and treating service providers and faculty with respect and courtesy.

- abiding by disabilities services policies.

Faculty responsibilities include:

- referring students to disabilities services to have appropriate accommodations determined.
- helping provide reasonable accommodation including the use of auxiliary aids, note-takers and tape recording.
- providing advising, counseling, and instruction to students with disabilities in a fully accessible environment.
- showing confidence in students' abilities to achieve their intellectual, personal, and professional potential.
- keeping disability-related information **confidential**, discussing it only with people who have a valid reason to know.
- ensuring access to programs and events.

Disabilities services responsibilities include:

- providing information and services so that students with disabilities may participate in all of the programs, services, and activities of the institution.
- providing services in a timely fashion.
- collecting and reviewing documentation of a disability for eligibility and determining on behalf of the institution what types of accommodations are appropriate.
- keeping disability-related information confidential, discussing it only with those who have a valid reason to know.
- helping faculty and staff provide reasonable accommodations.
- consulting with administration, faculty, staff on the provision of services, accommodations, and access as required under current federal and state law.
- advocating responsibly for the rights of persons with disabilities.

Responsibilities of the institution include:

- providing a campus in which educational, cultural and extracurricular activities are physically and programmatically accessible.
- creating policies that encourage the inclusion of persons with disabilities in employment and education.
- providing a process so students with disabilities may address their grievances with the institution and office(s) that provide services.

Role of the Disabilities Services Coordinators

The disabilities services coordinators are designated to receive and interpret documentation of the disability and to certify eligibility for services and accommodations. Disability information is confidential and students are not required to disclose this information to instructors. Individuals other than the disabilities services coordinators may not have access to a student’s diagnostic information.

If a faculty/staff member has questions about the appropriateness of an approved accommodation, the disabilities services coordinator should be contacted for further clarification. The faculty/staff member should continue to provide the accommodation while the issue is being resolved.

Including a syllabus statement informing students that you are familiar with academic supports and disabilities services on campus, to this effect:

“I am aware that all students have learning strengths and weaknesses. Some of those weaknesses may rise to the level of a disability. I want you to know that I am available to work with you and the resources on campus, academic support services and/or the disabilities office, to address your needs.”

Jane Jarrow, a nationally recognized expert on the law and disabilities, reviews the pitfalls one might encounter when the process is ignored.

When Faculty Are *TOO* Accommodating!

by Jane E. Jarrow, Ph.D.

Most faculty members in higher education today understand the legal and educational imperatives that mandate equal access to students with disabilities through academic accommodation. Sometimes, though, problems arise from faculty who are readily prepared to provide appropriate accommodation — it is their accommodating nature that can get them, the institution, and (sometimes) the student into trouble!

Most institutions have established a clearly articulated policy as to who holds the documentation of disability, what steps a student must take to declare their need for disability-related accommodations, and how that information is communicated to faculty. But what of the student who says, “I don’t want to go through the disability services office. I want to advocate for myself and work directly with faculty and negotiate my own accommodations.” Regardless of why students choose to go this independent route (and there are both good and bad reasons for taking such a stance), the faculty member who agrees to disregard institutional policy and honor accommodation requests directly from the student may not be doing anyone a favor!

Personal Jeopardy: Faculty members who work directly with students, discuss the disability, (possibly) look over the documentation, and agree to accommodation may be establishing themselves as the “gatekeepers” without meaning to do so. If the faculty member agrees to provide accommodation “x” and not accommodation “y” and later the student maintains that he/she was not appropriately accommodated, it is the faculty member’s decision that is subject to question and the faculty member who could conceivably be held responsible for violating this student’s civil rights. The faculty member who agrees to provide accommodations without institutional authorization for a student with one disability (for example, LD) but is less familiar and comfortable with another disability (for example, ADD) and sends that student back through channels for official documentation could be opening himself/herself up for charges of discrimination, intimidation, or harassment. Faculty members who conscientiously try to make life easier for the student by allowing the student to bring the documentation directly to them may gain access to confidential information to which they should not be privy. For all these reasons, it would be best for faculty not to be drawn into the collection of disability documentation or the decision-making regarding accommodation.

Institutional Jeopardy: The student who provides documentation to a single faculty member (who accepts and acts on that documentation) may be able to make a legitimate case for saying that he/she informed the institution of the disability and the need for accommodation. The faculty member should not be discussing the information that has been shared (because of issues of privacy and confidentiality), and yet the student may be expecting to receive similar consideration and accommodation from other faculty on the basis of having provided the documentation to someone in authority at the institution. If it is not made clear that the institution has not been “notified” until the documentation is provided and requests are made from such-and-such an office, the institution may not be in a position to defend itself from charges of discrimination by neglect for a student who does not receive accommodation by others within the institution. Or consider this scenario — Professor A accepts the documentation and provides accommodation without going through channels, as do Professors B and C, and then Professor D says, “I will provide accommodations when I receive proper notification from the disability services office that this is appropriate.” Professor D looks like the villain for following the rules! More distressing, however, is the possibility that the institution may be facing some very real difficulties if the disability services office determines that some of the accommodations that Professors A, B, and C provided were not warranted by the documentation and does not prescribe those same accommodations for Professor D to provide.

Student Jeopardy: Students with disabilities will still have those disabilities after they leave the postsecondary environment. Whether they choose to go on to graduate or professional school or seek a place in the world of work, chances are that if they needed accommodations to successfully function in higher education, they may need accommodation in their future endeavors as well. More and more often, those settings beyond the postsecondary

experience are ready and willing to provide accommodations on the basis of verification from the higher education institution that those same accommodations have been provided during the student's postsecondary career. If the student has no record of having been served by the institution — if the student was never on file in the disability services office and received all of his/her accommodations through individual discussion with faculty — that student will have no official history of being regarded or served as a person with a disability and may have a much more difficult time establishing the claim to accommodations in the future.

Bottom line: The policies and procedures were established
for everyone's protection. Everyone needs to play by the rules!

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Disability Information Access & Support
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Suggestions for Improving Student Performance

The needs of students with disabilities span a wide range. There are students at Hampshire with diagnosed disabilities who have developed the strategies and skills that allow them to pursue their academic work and who do not request accommodation. In some instances, the impact of a disability may affect a student's ability to demonstrate their knowledge within the constraints of a timed examination or on a particular academic task; Hampshire's academic structure may eliminate the need for accommodation. Some students find that a specific accommodation is needed; others may need to vary the accommodation depending on the task or situation. Some students with disabilities find that they spend considerably more time reading assignments or writing papers than their peers; when these students are able to anticipate the expectations for tasks and workload, for instance, through the use of a course syllabus or discussion with a chairperson or advisor, they are able to incorporate that information into their planning and make appropriate decisions. As for any new student entering college, learning to balance the various academic and social expectations of college life, and organizing one's time can a challenge; some disabilities may make this process

more difficult. Because of the way high school programs for students with disabilities are structured, some students may have less experience than their peers in anticipating and planning their work.

When an advisee or a student talks with you about a disability issue, ask about the strategies they use, what they feel they do well, and what kinds of concerns they have. When academic tasks shift, particularly as students move through Division I to Division II and Division III, the need for accommodations or the specific types of accommodations may change. If a student asks for accommodations, it is important to refer the student to the appropriate disabilities services coordinator rather than simply provide the accommodation. (Refer to “When Faculty Are Too Accommodating,” p. 10.)

We offer the following suggestions to assist faculty in meeting the growing diversity of student needs. We also welcome any additional strategies you have found helpful and would be happy to include selected strategies in the next edition of this guide.

- During the pre-registration period, be prepared to discuss course content as well as the approach you use and the expectations you have of students in your class. A student with a disability may be interested in information about the course that extends beyond content in order to make appropriate plans.
- Provide students with a detailed course syllabus. Be prepared to have a list of course readings available before the beginning of the semester, if at all possible; this allows time for students to obtain materials in alternative formats, to begin reading assignments, and to make decisions about how to balance the workload for your class with other commitments.
- Diminish or eliminate auditory and visual distractions in the classroom and in your office.
- Allow students to tape class sessions. Students who tape record classes can be asked to sign a form (available from disabilities services) indicating agreement not to share the tapes with other students in the class and/or to not release information or infringe on the publishing rights of the instructor.
- Clearly spell out the work (materials to be covered, due dates, timelines, etc.) that needs to be completed in order for students to receive evaluations in both written and oral format. Assignments that are presented in written and oral formats will help reduce confusion and need for individual consultation.

- Start each class with a brief description of material to be covered that session. At the conclusion, briefly summarize important points.
- Present new or technical vocabulary on the blackboard or use a handout. Using terms in context conveys greater meaning. Highlight major concepts both orally and visually.
- Announce changes in reading assignments or due dates for papers well in advance. Students who use taped materials need an average of several weeks to get a text recorded or scanned.
- Instruction provided in an array of approaches reaches more students than instruction using one method. Many teaching strategies (using multi-sensory approaches, providing a class syllabus, offering assistance with ways to approach reading assignments in your courses, etc.) that assist students with disabilities are also known to benefit students without disabilities.
- Provide adequate opportunity for questions.
- Use sequential steps for long-range assignments (such as project-based Division I exams). Try to build in steps for the student to receive feedback on early drafts of papers.
- Encourage students to use campus support services (e.g. pre-registration, assistance in ordering taped materials, alternative testing arrangements for Five College courses, study skills training, the writing and quantitative skills programs, S.T.A.R. - the Student to Student Academic Resource Center, the disabilities services coordinators, the student's advisor, etc.)

Students with Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical skills. No two students have exactly the same pattern or type of learning disabilities. By definition, an individual with a learning disability demonstrates average or above average intelligence levels; the marked discrepancy between intellectual capacity and a cognitive processing deficit clearly related to a deficit in academic achievement characterizes a learning disability. Documentation of the learning disability is required not only to establish the need for special services but to determine the individual nature of the necessary accommodation. While learning disabilities generally continue to affect individuals throughout their lifetimes, their impact can be ameliorated by

appropriate instructional interventions and by the use of compensatory strategies. In general, faculty members who use a variety of instructional modes will enhance learning for students with learning disabilities.

Types of learning disabilities:

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| dyslexia | difficulty reading |
| dysgraphia | difficulty performing the motor movements required for handwriting |
| dysphasia | difficulty speaking fluently and/or understanding others |
| dysnomia | difficulty recalling or remembering words or names |
| dyscalculia | difficulty with mathematics |
| visual discrimination | ability to see difference between similar appearing letters, numbers, words, and objects |
| auditory discrimination | ability to hear the difference between similar sounding words and syllables |

Some Hampshire students with learning disabilities have developed a wide range of learning strategies. However, a characteristic of students with learning disabilities in general is a lack of flexibility in making use of strategies that are appropriate to changing tasks. Should you become concerned, please refer the student to Joel Dansky, X5423.

Note: At most other colleges, a very high percentage of students with learning disabilities identify their needs at the time of enrollment. At Hampshire, the student's advisor or course instructor is more likely to be the first individual to become aware of the student's learning disability; if you become concerned, please refer the student to appropriate disabilities services coordinator.

Instructional strategies

Writing process

Some students with a learning disability may have difficulty organizing written material, may use limited vocabulary, or may have particularly difficulty misspelling words. A student who has access to appropriate tools may better enable the student to express his or her comprehension of the material. The computer lab in the Library has available software programs that include a spelling program developed for students who are dyslexic and a mind-mapping program to assist in organizing papers or projects. Discussions about your expectations for early and later drafts, the extent to which the use of a spell checker is

useful, and recommendations for strategies (such as initially tape recording one's ideas in order to make organizational and content decisions) can be helpful. Refer students to the staff at the Writing Program and to Joel Dansky.

Auditory difficulties

Some students may experience difficulty integrating information presented orally, so they may not be able to follow the logic and organization of a lecture or follow rapidly moving class discussions.

- Permit a student to tape a class if he or she needs to listen to the class discussion more than once.
- Outline class presentations and legibly write new words and terms on the chalkboard or on an overhead transparency.
- Encourage the student to use a note taker (see section on note taking arrangements).
- Repeat and summarize segments of each presentation.
- Provide students with a written copy of major points, models, outlines, etc.
- In dealing with abstract concepts, paraphrase them in specific terms, illustrate them with concrete examples and/or personal experiences, or use hands-on models or visual tools such as charts and graphs.
- Select well-written reading materials.
- Encourage the student to restate questions in his or her own words before beginning to respond.

Visual difficulties

Reading may be slow and deliberate and comprehension may be impaired for a student with learning disabilities, particularly when dealing with large quantities of material.

Comprehension and speed can be expedited dramatically with the addition of auditory input.

- Be prepared to have lists of required readings available well before the first day of class to allow students to begin their reading early or to arrange to obtain texts on tape.
- Provide students with supplementary material that cues them to key points in the readings.
- When possible, provide the cleanest version of materials to be copied. Copies of copies become blurred and extraneous markings are distracting, making the reading process more fatiguing.
- Read aloud material that is written on the chalkboard or on overhead transparencies.
- Arrange for handouts to be tape recorded or scanned before the course begins. Call the disabilities services coordinator for assistance.

Memory processing

Memory or sequencing difficulties may impede the student's execution of complicated directions.

- Keep oral instructions concise and logical.
- Repeat or reword complicated directions.
- Students who need to memorize important information frequently benefit from using multi-sensory strategies.
- Provide the time for a student to write down important information.

Note taking Alternatives

Some students with learning disabilities need alternative ways to take notes because they cannot write effectively or assimilate, remember and organize the material while listening to a lecture or participating in discussion.

- Encourage the use of a note taker or tape recorder for the student.
- Permit tape recording of classes or make your notes available for materials not found in texts or other readily available sources.
- Assist the student in borrowing a classmate's notes.
- Provide photocopies of your notes and overhead transparencies. (The disabilities services coordinators will provide these copies at our cost.)

Accommodations may include:

- reduced academic load
- academic counseling
- use of tape recorders
- use of note takers and proofreaders
- arrangements for alternative test formats and extended time in Five College courses
- use of assistive technology

Participation

Assess the student's ability to participate in classroom or group activities. While many students with learning disabilities are highly articulate, some have difficulty in talking, responding, or reading in front of a group. Signaling that you will expect a response in a moment or allowing the student to repeat the question before responding often provides the student with the opportunity to form a response.

Specialized limitations

Some students with learning disabilities may have poor coordination or trouble judging distance or time or differentiating between left and right. Such devices as demonstrations from the student's left-right frame of reference and the use of color codes or supplementary symbols may overcome perceptual problems.

The science or research laboratory, computer lab or research facilities

Settings other than the standard classroom can be especially overwhelming for students with learning disabilities. Unfamiliar equipment, exact measurement, and multi-step procedures may demand precisely those skills that are hardest for them to acquire.

- Provide an individual orientation to the laboratory or the library and to their equipment. Provide additional opportunities to practice tasks and use equipment to minimize student anxiety.
- Clearly and legibly label equipment, tools, and materials. Color code for enhanced visual recognition.
- Make available cue cards or labels designating the steps of a procedure to expedite the mastering of a sequence.
- Use specialized adaptive equipment to help with tasks such as exact measurements.

Behavior

Because of perceptual deficiencies some students with learning disabilities inefficiently process social cues and may respond inappropriately. They may lack social skills, or have difficulty sustaining or focusing attention. If such a difficulty becomes apparent, we recommend that you discuss the situation privately with the student. If you feel the situation warrants additional intervention, contact the disabilities services coordinators or the Dean of Students office.

Testing for Learning Disabilities

Students who wish to be pursue testing for learning disabilities may consult with Joel Dansky about the process and referrals; no testing is provided by the college.

Students with Attention Deficit Disorder

Students who have been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD) may exhibit characteristics of hyperactivity (ADHD) or may be highly distractible. For many students with ADD or ADHD, the problems associated with the disorder have led to lost opportunities - lost opportunities to perhaps learn as much as their peers and lost

opportunities to develop skills and strategies normally associated with their age group. Many individuals respond well to the use of strategies that encourage them to identify their strengths and weaknesses as learners, set priorities, and make plans.

- Ask the student what has helped in the past.
- Break long-range tasks into stages or steps.
- Help students set priorities; some ADHD individuals have a great deal of difficulty making long-range plans.
- Stress key points at beginning and end of conversations and or class meetings.
- Use eye contact.
- Redefine academic issues as pragmatic rather than moral issues by removing a judgmental approach from the interaction. A collaborative, problem solving approach tends to be more effective.
- Model problem solving behaviors.
- Help students identify the progress they are making; point out intermediate success.
- Keep distractions to a minimum and assist students in learning strategies that will help them minimize distraction.
- Encourage students to participate in workings on learning strategies and to use equipment such as computers and software programs, digital memo recorders, and appointment books to help them organize their time.
- Make expectations explicit.
- Encourage the use of brainstorming techniques.
- When extending deadlines, ask what progress has been made and negotiate a new deadline, with clear requirements for what needs to be accomplished by that date. Advisors are urged to ask about the student's overall work load; when multiple extensions are being sought, many students become overwhelmed and find it difficult to set priorities.

Evaluations:

The current student health coverage plan (for students who have chosen it) covers up to 80% of the costs for ADHD/ADD evaluations.

Students with Psychological Disabilities

Psychological disabilities cover a wide range, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, bi-polar disorder, and schizophrenia. Many of these conditions can be greatly improved with medication, therapy, and social support. Students with psychological disabilities may require regular treatment or, on occasion,

hospitalization. Emotional concerns may manifest themselves in negative or apathetic attitudes or behavior. It may be helpful to remember that these students have as little control over their disabilities as students with physical disabilities.

- Psychological problems affect people of every age, sex, and income. One in five Americans will have some form of mental illness (U.S. National Institute of Health). Those under treatment may have few periods of active symptoms.
- Many psychiatric disabilities can be controlled with medication. However, some medications cause undesirable side effects, such as drowsiness or disorientation that can affect performance.
- Depression and anxiety, which may be chronic or acute, are among the most common psychological disabilities.
- Psychological impairments may result in additional symptoms, such as poor concentration, irritability, fatigue, anxiety, apathy, perception problems, physical symptoms (such as sleep disorders), and learning difficulties.
- The side effects of some medications make early morning classes unrealistic.

Consider the following:

- If the student initiates the conversation, it may be appropriate to discuss problems and side effects associated with medications.
- Be willing to clarify assignments and performance expectations, several times if necessary.
- Establish clear boundaries regarding your relationship with students. Refer them for counseling, if necessary.
- Confidentiality should be protected whenever possible.
- Remind the student of services available through the coordinator of services for psychological disabilities, Anne Downes at X5722.

Accommodations may include:

- academic counseling/reducing academic load.
- reading materials on cassette tape or text-to-speech software.
- note takers or tape recording in class.
- arranged classroom seating
- flexibility in attendance requirements with health-related absences.
- extended time for assignments

If a student requests an accommodation, it is important to refer the student to Anne Downes rather than simply provide the accommodation. (Refer to “When Faculty Are Too Accommodating,” p.10.)

If behavior is a concern:

- Discuss classroom behavior with the student candidly and privately. Be specific.

- Do not attempt to diagnose or treat the psychological disorder; focus on the student's behavior.
- If it seems appropriate, refer the student to Health Services. If the student's behavior is threatening or abusive, refer the matter to the Dean of Students office.

Students with Mobility Impairments

A wide range of conditions may limit mobility and/or hand function. Common ones are paraplegia or quadriplegia, amputation, arthritis, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, cardiac conditions, multiple sclerosis, post-polio syndrome, stroke, and respiratory disease. Functional limitations and abilities vary widely even within the same type of disability. Students may have difficulty getting to and from class, performing in class, and managing out-of-class assignments and tests. Accommodations vary greatly and can only be determined on an individual basis.

Physical access to classroom and meeting space is a major concern. Wheelchairs, crutches and braces, canes and prostheses can cause fatigue easily or make it difficult to move about, especially within the time constraints imposed by class and meeting schedules. Almost all spaces in academic buildings are accessible to students with mobility impairments via ramps, elevators, and automatic door openers. West Lecture Hall in Franklin Patterson Hall has a lift that enables individuals in wheelchairs to gain access to the speaker's (ground) level of the auditorium. Some administrative offices are wheelchair accessible; some administrative staff need to make alternative arrangements to afford students in wheelchairs equal access to their services. Residential space for students in wheelchairs is limited to one dorm room or mod in four of the five residential areas on campus. Leaving class may pose similar problems, especially in the event of an emergency.

- Occasional lateness may be unavoidable. Tardiness or absence may be caused by transportation problems, inclement weather, wheelchair or elevator breakdown or may be affected by a change in medication.
- Some classrooms present obstacles to full participation. In such cases, it is important to make every effort to integrate these students into the class or to arrange for a different more accessible classroom.
- Be prepared to ask or to be asked to change the location of a class if there are no other solutions for accessibility.
- Be familiar with the building's evacuation plan.
- Alert the disabilities office if fixed seating, tables that are too high, etc., pose problems of access.

Disabilities services can:

- Help arrange assistance from library personnel to access card catalogues, bookshelves, microfiche, and other equipment or to manipulate the pages of publications.
- Help with access to resources required for off-campus assignments and field work.
- Arrange special transportation, if needed. Advance notice is required. Please contact Joel Dansky, X5423.

Students with Deafness or Hearing Impairments

More individuals in the United States have a hearing impairment than any other type of physical disability. A hearing impairment refers to any type or degree of auditory impairment; deafness is an inability to use hearing as a means of communication. Hearing loss may be mild, moderate, or profound. A person who is born with a hearing loss may have language deficiencies and exhibit poor vocabulary and syntax. People with acquired deafness may have excellent speech.

Students who are hard of hearing may use speech, lip reading, and hearing aids to enhance communication. Some students are highly skilled in speech reading; only 30-40% of spoken language is understandable through speech reading. If they use an FM amplification system, the instructor is asked to wear a clip-on microphone. The system's limitations may affect participation, so instructors should repeat classroom instructions.

- Speak in a normal speaking voice; however, be aware of personal habits, such as covering one's mouth or dropping one's voice at the end of a sentence, that may create interference.

Many individuals learn communication through American Sign Language (ASL) and will require an interpreter. As a result, ASL may be their first language and English their second. They often view themselves as a cultural and linguistic minority. As with any cultural group, people who are deaf have their own values, social norms and traditions.

Interpreters

Interpreters are provided to many students with hearing impairments or deafness. Interpreters are persons who are taught to translate words into the style of language best understood by the student. Interpreters adhere to a strict code of ethics as part of their contract. Interpreters may not discuss, counsel, advise, or give personal opinions and do not participate in discussions or discuss student performance.

- Structure the setting so that the student can see the instructor, the interpreter and the chalkboard all in one view.
- Speak directly to the student who is deaf; the interpreter will translate.

- Speak in clear and concise language. Face the individual as much as possible when talking.
- Whenever possible, provide a list of technical or scientific words in advance. Unfamiliar vocabulary is difficult to interpret. When this isn't possible, write words on paper, chalkboard, overheads, etc.
- Give important changes in meeting times or assignments in writing.
- Allow extra time when you refer to a text so that the student can check the reference and turn his/her attention back to the interpreter.
- If interpreters are needed for advisor or divisional examination meetings, please provide at least two weeks notice so that arrangements can be made.
- Some students with hearing impairments may get along reasonably well in day-to-day activities but may require interpreter services in order to access all the subtleties of language required for comprehension.
- Repeat questions or comments that come from the back of room or from areas that are cut off from the student's visual field.
- Use closed-captioned films and videos.
- Allow time to translate speech to another language (e.g. sign language).
- Use visual aids and chalkboard as much as possible. Concepts are more easily understood using visual methods.
- Check to see if using electronic mail for class and private discussions is appropriate.

Accommodations may include:

- note taker and interpreter services
- teletypewriters (TTY) and amplified phones available across campus
- adaptive equipment loaned for academic use (FM systems, for example)
- assigned or arranged classroom seating
- visual warning systems
- emergency evacuation assistance
- provision of closed captioned films and videos

Students with Blindness/Visual Impairments

Visual impairments vary greatly. Most persons who are legally blind have some vision. Those with low vision may rely on residual vision and adaptive equipment.

- Provide handouts, reading lists, or syllabi in advance so that students can transfer them to alternate formats.
- Face the class when speaking.
- Provide verbal descriptions of what is on the chalkboard, overhead, or video monitor.
- Assist readers and note takers when possible. Making an additional copy of materials or texts can be very helpful.

- Provide copies of notes or permit note taking devices.
- Consider alternate tasks.
- Plan field trips and special projects well in advance and alert the field supervisor to the need for alternate arrangements.
- Request a room with a white board and use black markers.
- Use large print lab signs, equipment labels, and handouts.
- Make assignments available in electronic format.
- Arrange for the individual to sit in close proximity to the instructor.

Accommodations may include:

- use of reader, note taker, or scribe services
- assistance obtaining recorded texts and other materials
- classroom relocation, if needed
- use of manipulative learning aids whenever possible
- classroom adaptations and technology

Students with Medical/Chronic Health Related Impairments

A wide range of conditions may interfere with stamina and mobility and affect academic functioning. Common conditions may include asthma, auto-immune disease, Lyme disease, diabetes, cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, multiple chemical sensitivities, or sickle cell anemia. Functional limitations and abilities will vary widely, even within the same type of disability. Students may have difficulty getting to class, performing in class, and managing assignments and papers. Accommodations can vary greatly and can only be determined on an individual basis.

- Occasional absences may be unavoidable.
- Scheduling may be an issue; some students may perform best in the mornings and others later in the day.
- Chronic health problems may cause secondary disabilities such as depression and anxiety.
- Progression of illness is unpredictable. Periodic remissions may allow for added energy and productivity, while exacerbations may result in inability to attend to commitments and may require hospitalization.

When Writing Evaluations

Evaluations, whether for course work or for divisional examinations, should be an assessment of the quality and characteristics of the student's performance. You should not include comments on areas unrelated to the student's work, such as personality traits, physical or learning disabilities, or speculations about the student's psychological state.

(from *Guidelines for Writing Narrative Evaluations*)

Five College Arrangements

Students with disabilities whose documentation indicates the need for accommodation who wish to take off-campus courses should contact the appropriate disabilities services coordinator. Their role is to verify to their appropriate Five College counterpart that the student is registered with disabilities services at Hampshire and to alert them to the need for accommodation. Since each campus uses slightly different procedures, Hampshire College Disabilities Services makes sure that students receive information on the steps to take in order to assure that arrangements are made. Advisees should be urged to request accommodation in a timely manner.

When a student from another campus takes courses at Hampshire, provision of services occurs through the disabilities services coordinator on the Hampshire campus once notification has been received from the home campus that accommodations or other services are appropriate. If you have questions about accommodations for student with disabilities from other campuses, please do not hesitate to contact the disabilities services coordinators.

Information on Note Takers

Note taking assistance is provided to some students who have sensory impairments, difficulty processing information, or lack the physical ability to take notes. Assistance may be provided in a variety of ways:

Faculty can assist:

- by providing lecture notes in the syllabus, on reserve in the library, or on the Internet.
- by tape recording classes and placing the tapes on reserve
- by making overheads available for students who cannot see well, cannot write information quickly, or who request copies.

Tape recording:

Tape recording can be effective and permit qualified students to independently access important information. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, faculty cannot deny a student with a disability the use of a tape recorder for notes. If a faculty member is concerned about taping, it is appropriate to ask the student to:

- have the disabilities services coordinator confirm eligibility for the accommodation.
- signed an agreement defining use of tapes and the information from the class.

Volunteer note takers:

- When students qualify for note takers, we seek the assistance of volunteers. We may ask the instructor to identify or make an announcement in the class, usually during the first few days of the semester, that a note taker is needed. The announcement should not specify that the note taker is needed because a student has a disability or publicly identify the student who will use the notes.
- We are more than happy to provide a community service evaluation for students who work as voluntary note takers.
- Guidelines and initial training for note takers are available from Joel Dansky.

General guidelines for note taking:

- A note taker is not a replacement for attending class.
- Neither the instructor nor the disabilities services coordinators are responsible for providing notes in the absence of 1) a formal request from the student, 2) appropriateness for the particular student's circumstances, 3) timely notification, or 4) student attending class.

Stress

If a student you are working with seems to be experiencing undue stress, please make referrals to campus resources, including health services, residential staff, CASA, the Dean of Students office, or the disabilities services coordinators, Joel Dansky, X5423 or Anne Downes, X5722.

This Handbook

This handbook for faculty and staff was originally produced by Karyl Lynch and Allana Taranto (F95). It was revised by Joel Dansky and Anne Downes in 2005. Thanks are due to the SALT Center (Strategic Alternative Learning Center) at the University of Arizona, the DSSHE-L listserv and AHEAD, the Association on Disabilities and Higher Education, Georgia Southern University and Utah State University. Jane Jarrow's essay, "When Faculty Are Too Accommodating!" is reproduced with permission.