

Disability in Higher Education



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Disability

Any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity.

- Congenital or Acquired
- Invisible Disabilities
- Temporary
- Frequency of disability



U.S. Census Data 2010

- 56.7 million people, 19% of the population, reported disability
- 8.1 million who are blind/low vision
- 7.6 million who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- 30.6 million who have a disability related to mobility
- 11.2% of the population under 65 in Tennessee has a disability



Civil Rights Laws

- **Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability...shall solely on the basis of disability be excluded from participation in or be subjected to discrimination in any program receiving federal money.

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 1990**

Title II prohibits state and local governments from discriminating due to disability

- **Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA), 2008**



Responsibilities of a public university to students with disabilities

- Architectural access.
- Programmatic access.
- Modification to policies, practices and procedures.



Disability Services

- Disability Services offers qualifying students who register with our office a variety of accommodations and assistance. Our mission is to provide services and promote an accessible environment which allows people with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in educational pursuits and other campus activities.
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- Students in all ETSU and TNeCampus programs
- Faculty/Staff—both ETSU and TNeCampus
- Physical plant and facility managers



Where are the Accommodations?

- Classroom
- Testing
- Housing
- Other



Syllabus Statement

- It is the policy of ETSU to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law and the University's commitment to equal educational opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodations, for example note taking assistance, exam time adjustment or seating placement, should meet with Disability Services. Faculty accommodation forms are provided to eligible students and should be shared with the instructor as early in the semester as possible. Disability Services can be reached via telephone at (423) 439-8346 or web at <https://www.etsu.edu/students/ds/>



Accommodations

- Individualized and Reasonable
- Do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program or class.
- Do not pose undue financial or administrative burden.



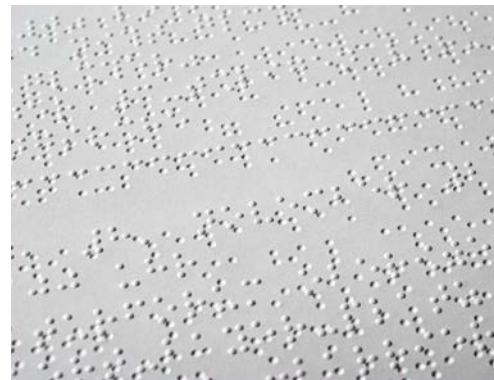
Individualized & Reasonable

- Designed to level the playing field.
- To ensure equal access to an education to all aspects of college life.
- Preserve the academic integrity of the university and its programs.
- They do not reduce learning expectations nor do they reduce or eliminate the effects of student's disability.
- They ensure assessments measure a student's knowledge and skills rather than the disability.



Classroom Accommodations

- Priority seating
- Audio recording
- Note taking assistance
- Sign language interpreter
- Captioning
- Transcription
- Audio description
- Attendance consideration
- Personal assistant



Testing

- Extended time
- Low distraction
- Reader
- Scribe
- Enlarged print
- Braille
- Calculator
- Alternate test sheet



Time
for
Exams

classroomclipart.com
<http://classroomclipart.com>



Respective Roles...

Student

- Self identify as a student with a disability.
- Provide professor their Faculty Accommodation Form.
- Attend class.
- Adhere to the Student Code of Conduct.

Faculty

- Implement accommodations in the Faculty Accommodation Form.
- Refer students requesting accommodations to DS
- Identify essential elements of classes.
- Maintain confidentiality of all disability related information
- Hold students with disabilities to the same standard.



Disabilities at ETSU

- ADD/ADHD
- Learning Disability
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Mental Health Disability
- Medical Disability
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Mobility Impairment
- Head Injury



Accommodations for Students with Sensory Disabilities

Blind/Low Vision/Other

- Preferential Seating
- Enlarged print materials and exams
- Extended time on exams
- Note taking assistance/audio recording
- Eliminate Scantron
- Braille materials
- Audio description

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

- Preferential seating
- Sign language interpreter
- Transcription
- Note taking assistance
- Extended time in exams
- Captioning
- Face the class when speaking
- FM transmitter



ADD/ADHD

- A developmental disorder that is marked by persistent symptoms of inattention or by symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsivity or by symptoms of all three and that is not caused by any serious underlying physical or mental disorder.
- Inattentive: Easily distracted, does not follow directions or finish tasks, appears to be unengaged, daydreaming, makes careless mistakes, difficulty with executive functioning skills, loses things
- Hyperactive: Fidgeting, restlessness, excessive talking
- Impulsive: Blurts out answers, interrupts others



ADD/ADHD in adulthood

- Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Easily frustrated
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Relationship problems
- Substance abuse or addiction
- Procrastination
- Disorganized
- Tardy



Accommodations for Students with ADD/ADHD

- Extended test time
- Low distraction test setting
- Audio recording lectures
- Preferential seating
- eTexts



Best practice considerations....

- Syllabus light on text
- Preview and summary statements in lectures
- Outlines or study guides



Learning Disabilities

- A neurological disorder that results in a difficulty in learning that cannot be attributed to low motivation, intelligence or inadequate teaching.
- A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations
- Generalized or specific
 - Dyslexia
 - Dyscalculia
 - Dysgraphia
 - Auditory Processing Disorder / Central Auditory Processing
 - Language Processing Disorder



Dyslexia

- Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

International Dyslexia Association definition and the definition adopted in Tennessee HB 1735 / SB 2002

- Bill Haslam signed the Say Dyslexia Bill in 2016



Reading and Writing Skill Deficits

- Lacks accurate and fluent word recognition. Poor spelling and decoding abilities.
- Reduced comprehension, reduced ability to learn new vocabulary.
- Difficulty composing and analyzing written word.
- Note taking is less effective.
- Foreign language requirement is often a problem.



Accommodating students with Dyslexia

- Extended test time
- Oral testing
- Speech to text programs for writing
- Audio recording lectures
- Use of a laptop for note taking and essay style exam questions
- Alternate to foreign language requirement
- Etexts
- Text to speech technology allowing use of digital textbooks
- Eliminate scantron, allow student to write on the exam



Best Practices considerations

- Introduce vocabulary
- Break assignments into smaller pieces
- Consider interim due dates
- Consider alternate forms of coursework or testing material
- Consider presentation in multiple modalities
- Consider review packets
- Select textbooks with audio book option
- Be available to discuss material, ideas and assignments
- Provide regular feedback wherever possible



Autism Spectrum Disorder

A spectrum of neurodevelopmental disorders that range in severity and impact. Characterized by social skill deficits among other unique characteristics.

Diagnostic Criteria: Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities (RRB)

- Asperger's Disorder, High Functioning Autism,
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, or
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder NOS

- DSM grouped as Autistic Spectrum Disorder



Prevalence and Characteristics of ASD

- 1 in 68 children diagnosed (2014). 1/42 boys vs 1/189 girls: 4.5X more common in boys
- Almost half of children identified with ASD have average to above average intellectual ability.
- Many excel in STEM disciplines.
- Many are creative.
- Co-occurring diagnoses are common.
- Number of students with ASD diagnosis in post secondary education has more than tripled in the last five years.



Social Challenges

- One expert described students with Autism as having a “prosthetic” temporal lobe
- Poor eye contact
- Sometimes too candid
- Often very limited personal interests
- Limitations in turn taking interactions
- Difficulties in self management
- Anxiety/social withdrawal



Language/Communication Challenges

Receptive:

- Slower to process verbal exchanges
- May misunderstand sarcasm, idiom
- May misread or misinterpret social facial expressions and body language : when looking at faces they only get information from the mouth (spoken word)

Expressive:

- Difficulty initiating dialogue
- Difficulty with turn taking in conversation
- Rambling tangential communication



Executive Function Challenges

- Uneven learning profile
- Nebulous sense of time
- Difficulty with planning, organization
- Multi-tasking can be extremely challenging
- Change or transitions can be difficult
- Integrating/synthesizing material can be a challenge
- “Context blindness”: cannot go from point to whole
- Anxiety
- Focus



In the classroom...

- Student may appear bored or disinterested
- Student may fidget or self-stimulate to soothe themselves
- May dominate Q&A or class discussions
- Student may interrupt with questions or to ramble about a tangentially related topic
- May be upset by changes in the syllabus or changes in class location
- May send multiple emails in a short time period
- Uninterested in or challenged by group work



And around campus...

- Student may be shaken by changes in housing or routine
- Something as simple as a fire drill could be unnerving
- Student may have a routine of doing things that they cannot deviate from
- Student may be upset by appointment changes



Strengths of Students with ASD

- Honest
- Adhere to personal values in spite of external pressure
- Free of biases
- Creative “outside the box” thinkers
- Often articulate and have a large vocabulary
- Task oriented
- Excellent long term, rote memory
- Internally motivated, perseverance
- May have good visual-spatial skills
- Detail oriented



Accommodating Students with ASD

- Time and a half on exams
- Low distraction test setting
- Audio Recording Lectures
- Note taking assistance



Best practices considerations for the classroom....

- Communicate verbally and in writing
- Preview and summary statement
- Consistent format in presentation/exams
- Break down complex assignments into smaller pieces
- Consider interim due dates
- Varied assessments (projects, presentations, exams)
- Shorter and more frequent exams with varied question types
- Assign groups and define roles
- Syllabus light on text



Support in Disability Services

- MentorMe!
- Outside the Box



Final Thoughts...

- Disability Services is a resource for faculty as well as students.
- Accessibility whenever possible.
- Provide accommodations to level the playing field.
- Students are students!

ETSU Disability Services

Third floor Nell Dossett Residence Hall

423.439.8346

<http://www.etsu.edu/students/ds/>



Resources

- <https://add.org/college-students/>
- <http://aspergercenter.com/articles/college-experience-asperger-syndrome.pdf>
- <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2018/05/09/college-autism-spectrum/>
- <https://www.mtsu.edu/dyslexia/>
- https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/readready/documents/dyslexia_resource_guide.pdf
- Taylor, C. M., & Colvin, K. L. (2013). Universal Design: A Tool to Help College Students With Asperger's Syndrome Engage on Campus. *About Campus*, 18(3), 9-15.

