

## **Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty**

### ***“A student has told me that they have a disability. What do I do?”***

Students may disclose to instructors that they have a disability. However, in order for them to receive academic accommodations in their classes, they must register for services with the ADA Accommodations Office and be approved for accommodations. Once they are approved, they can send accommodation letters to their instructors so that instructors know what accommodations to provide to the student. If a student tells you they have a disability, you can ask them if they have contacted the ADA office and if they have been approved for accommodations. If they say they have not, refer them to the ADA office.

### ***“I have noticed that a student is struggling and think that it may be disability related; however, the student hasn’t said anything to me about a disability. What should I do?”***

It is not uncommon for an instructor to notice things like this – especially if you have worked with students with disabilities in the past. However, you cannot ask a student if they have a disability. It’s best to approach the student from a place of concern. Start the conversation with something like “I have noticed that your work has declined. Is everything ok?” This will open up a dialogue that demonstrates you want to help and allow you to refer the student to resources based on what they share. Maybe they will disclose a disability, and you can refer them to our office. Maybe they will disclose that they are struggling personally and need assistance from the Student Success Center. Maybe they will say they just aren’t getting the material and you can refer them to tutoring through the Learning Success Center. Maybe they will say “Everything is fine” and you can still make sure they’re aware of resources like the ADA office, SSC, and LSC.

### ***“I received an email with accommodations for a student. What do I need to do?”***

It is important for students and instructors to discuss the logistics of how accommodations will be implemented in the class. Sometimes a student may share their disability or condition with you, but you do not need to know the student’s particular disability in order to provide the approved accommodations. Discussing the logistics of the accommodations can take place in person, virtually, or via email. There is a section on the ADA office website that provides more information about implementing accommodations.

### ***“A student with accommodations wants something that I don’t think is part of their accommodations. What do I do?”***

Reach out to the ADA Accommodations Office for clarification.

Because classes can be so different from one to the next and a student’s disability may affect them differently than another student, there is not always a “one size fits all” way that some accommodations work. For example, “note taking assistance” and “spelling accommodations” are two that can work differently in different classes so it requires a mutual understanding between the student and the instructor of what would be best.

Sometimes students do not always understand their accommodations. For example, the accommodation for “distraction reduced testing” does not guarantee the student will test in a private room. It may be their preference and there may be situations when that can be provided, but that may not be possible and is not required.

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***“I received accommodations from a student that fundamentally alter my course. What do I need to do?”***

The ADA Accommodations Office makes every effort to ensure that approved accommodations do not alter curriculum; however, the college has a wide variety of programs and we are not experts on them. If you feel a student’s accommodation fundamentally alters your course, reach out to [ada@jeffersonstate.edu](mailto:ada@jeffersonstate.edu) with your concerns. We will work with you to find a resolution and, if necessary, there is a process for evaluating fundamental alterations.

***“A student with accommodations is being disruptive in class. What should I do?”***

Students with disabilities are expected to meet the same standards as any other student – including adhering to the student code of conduct. In these situations, address the student as you would any other student in the same situation. If you are unsure how to handle the situation, reach out to the ADA office.

***“The parent of a student with accommodations has reached out to me. Should I communicate with the parent about the student?”***

It is not uncommon for parents of students with disabilities to be very involved in their students’ lives. Nonetheless, it is always recommended that communication come from the student directly. Remember your obligations under FERPA. You could respond by saying “Thank you for reaching out. Please encourage your student to reach out to me directly and I will be happy to assist them.” Sometimes parents get access to their student’s account including Canvas and email. Sometimes in these situations the parent will message the instructor from the student’s account. Obviously, students should never share access to their accounts with anyone. You can inform the parent that they should not be emailing from the student’s account.

***“A student has testing accommodations. How do I provide those?”***

Extended time for tests and distraction reduced testing are the two most common accommodations. For online classes, you just need to extend the time appropriately for each exam/quiz. It is up to the student in an online class to coordinate their own distraction reduced testing environment. For in person classes, instructors can provide these accommodations by coordinating with the student on what will work best for your schedules and this class. For the extended time, should the student arrive early or can they stay late? That will depend on your schedule and theirs. For the distraction reduced testing, is there a quiet room nearby the classroom that they can test or will you need to coordinate a test proctor? There is more information about test proctoring on the ADA Accommodations Office website.