SSWD Faculty Guide: Working Together

What is SSWD?

Services to Students with Disabilities (SSWD) is responsible for identifying and approving academic modifications for equal program access for students with documented disabilities. SSWD provides consultation and serves as a resource to faculty. Faculty wishing to make a referral should contact the SSWD office located at Lassen Hall, Room 1008, (916) 278-6955 (Voice Only) or sswd@csus.edu. For more information and resources visit the SSWD website https://www. csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities.

Legal Requirements

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. According to these laws, no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.

"Qualified" with respect to post-secondary educational services, means:

"a person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices; the removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers; or the provision of auxiliary aids and services."

"Person with a disability" means:

"any person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working], 2) has a record of such an impairment, or 3) is regarded as having such an impairment."

Student's Role

It is the student's responsibility to submit an application, medical documentation verifying their disability and meet with an SSWD Access Coordinator to discuss accommodations. Students should contact faculty to provide them a current accommodation letter as soon as possible, as accommodations are not retroactive. Students are responsible for requesting these accommodation letters signed by an SSWD Access Coordinator EACH semester where accommodations may be required.

Faculty Role

Faculty members are encouraged to be responsive and flexible with the pedagogical needs of all students. However, students with identified disabilities may require specific academic adjustments to equalize their academic pursuit. Therefore, it is recommended that faculty include in their class syllabus a statement such as this:

> *"Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class, will be provided. Please be advised that disability-related academic adjustments are not retroactive. SSWD is located on the first floor of Lassen Hall 1008. Phone is 916-278-6955 and e-mail is sswd@csus.edu. For a complete listing of services and current business hours visit https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/.*

It is important that each Academic Department and faculty member submit their booklists to the Hornet Bookstore by the established deadlines. Earlier submission, whenever possible, is strongly encouraged, as it takes time to produce or convert the printed or electronic material into alternative format (i.e. Braille, large print, audio) for students. In addition to books, an electronic version (pdf preferred) clear copy of all syllabi, tests, and printed handouts (i.e. clean with no extra markings) from faculty members are needed for conversion to alternative format for students with visual impairments. Unclear print copies cannot be scanned into the computer for conversion and must be hand typed, which will take significantly longer time to convert into an accessible format.

Useful Teaching Techniques

Below you will find examples of teaching techniques in the classroom, laboratory, examinations, and field work that benefit all students, but are especially useful for students who have disabilities.

Classroom

- Prepare course materials such as the syllabi, readings, assignments and other content early (ideally prior to registration) so that students and the SSWD office have enough time to convert them into alternative format (e.g. audio format, Braille, large print). Better yet upload clean, unmarked pdf versions of these materials into Canvas, so all students have access to the materials at the same time.
- Design accessible web-based instructional material according to the guidelines established by the [World Wide Web Consortium](www.w3.org/WAI/References/QuickTips/) www.w3.org/WAI/References/QuickTips/

- Face the class when speaking. Repeat discussion questions. Speak loudly and clearly. Use a microphone, as sound will travel better, even if no one has self-identified voice amplification.
- Write key phrases and lecture outlines on the whiteboard before classes begin
- When selecting videos, select ones that already have captioning as well as visual descriptions so blind/low vision as well as deaf students will be able to equally participate. Note, equal access requires that if a student requires captioning or visual descriptions that no one in the class is able to view the video until it is accessible for all.
- When using the whiteboard, provide students time to take photos, before erasing

Examinations and Fieldwork
- Build in flexibility as some students will require extra time to transcribe or process test questions or require alternative methods for learning and assessing;
- Consider allowing students to turn in exams via Canvas or e-mail.
- Ask student how he/she might be able to do specific aspects of field work. Include students in field work opportunities, rather than automatically suggesting non-field work alternatives.
- Consider how to eliminate educational barriers while building in course requirements.
- If a student requires test accommodations, faculty have the choice of either providing the accommodations themselves (e.g. additional time), or having SSWD Testing Center proctor/ For more information on the proctoring service go to the [Testing Center Website](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/testing-center/) https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/testing-center/

Most Important – Universal Design in Learning (UDL)

UDL is an approach to curriculum design that can help teachers customize curriculum to serve all learners, regardless of ability, disability, age, gender, or cultural and linguistic background. UDL provides a blueprint for designing strategies, materials, assessments, and tools to reach and teach students with diverse needs.

By building in flexibility and accessibility into the syllabi, disabled students will have increased ability for an equally accessible academic experience. What follows are just a few resources for faculty to explore, to learn more about UDL.

- [Universal Design for Learning](https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2_TEAL_UDL.pdf) https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2_TEAL_UDL.pdf
- [The Principles Of Universal Design](https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pdf) https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pdf
- [The UDL Guidelines](http://udlguidelines.cast.org/) http://udlguidelines.cast.org/
- [Universal Design of Instruction (UDI): Definition, Principles, Guidelines, and Examples](https://www.washington.edu/doit/universal-design-instruction-udi-definition-principles-guidelines-and-examples) https://www.washington.edu/doit/universal-design-instruction-udi-definition-principles-guidelines-and-examples

Confidentiality

Treat all matters related to students with disabilities CONFIDENTIALLY, in accordance with law and policy. If a student comes to you with an SSWD Accommodation Letter, invite the student to meet with you during office hours to review course requirements and discuss their accommodations. If you have any questions regarding appropriate accommodations for a student, contact Services to Students with Disabilities, (916) 278-6955 (Voice), or E-mail address sswd@csus.edu.

The content of Working Together is adapted from the DO-IT project at the University of Washington and endorsed by the University Committee for Persons with Disabilities of Sacramento State.