

Navigating Student Accommodations



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Objectives

- Be aware of the law/definitions guiding student accommodations.
- Learn about the UDSS application/review process.
- Recognize basic disability accommodations.
- Increase awareness of student rights and responsibilities.
- Increase awareness of faculty rights and responsibilities.
- Discuss “fundamental alterations” and what to do if you do not agree with an accommodation.

Federal Guidance

- Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Ensure protections for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, state and local government services and telecommunications.
- Americans With Disabilities Act Amendments Act (implemented 1/1/09)
 - Expanded the original ADA definition of Disability to include more conditions.
 - Helps explain why we now see a larger number of accommodation requests than in the past.

Federal Guidance

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 - Protects individuals from discrimination from any program or activity which receives federal funding
- Section 508
 - Requires Federal agencies to make electronic and information technology accessible to individuals with disabilities.
 - Good to be aware of, but not a guiding factor of UDSS.

Definitions

- “Individual with a Disability”
 - Individuals with physical or mental impairments which substantially limits one or more major life activities, or
 - Individuals who have a history of, or who are regarded as having physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Definitions, cont.

- Definition was expanded in the Amendments Act of 2008.
- “Major life activities” include, but are not limited to:

- Caring for oneself
- Performing manual tasks
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Eating
- Sleeping
- Walking
- Standing
- Lifting
- Bending
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Learning
- Reading
- Concentrating
- Working
- Functions of the immune system
- Normal cell growth
- Digestive
- Bowel
- Bladder
- Neurological
- Brain
- Respiratory
- Circulatory
- Endocrine
- Reproductive functions

*Test Anxiety is not typically considered to be a disability.

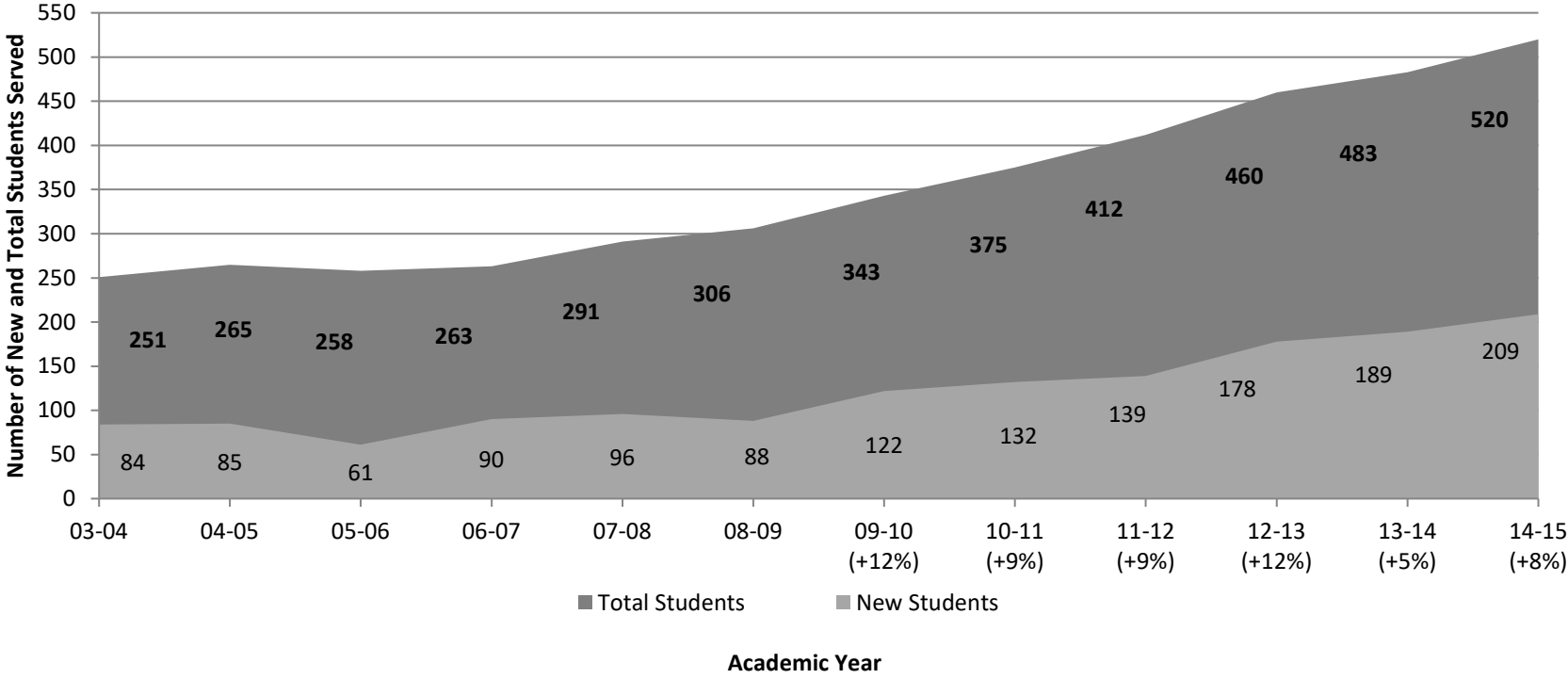


How do students qualify for services?

- Unlike K-12, post-secondary students with disabilities must self-identify to UDSS.
- Complete application and provide appropriate documentation.
 - Application can be found online at:
<http://www.uwyo.edu/udss/registering-with-udss/> or in person in Knight Hall 109.

UDSS Student Statistics

UW Disability Support Services - Increases and % Growth in New Students and Total Students Served Annually



UDSS Demographics

Based on Spring 2016 enrollment

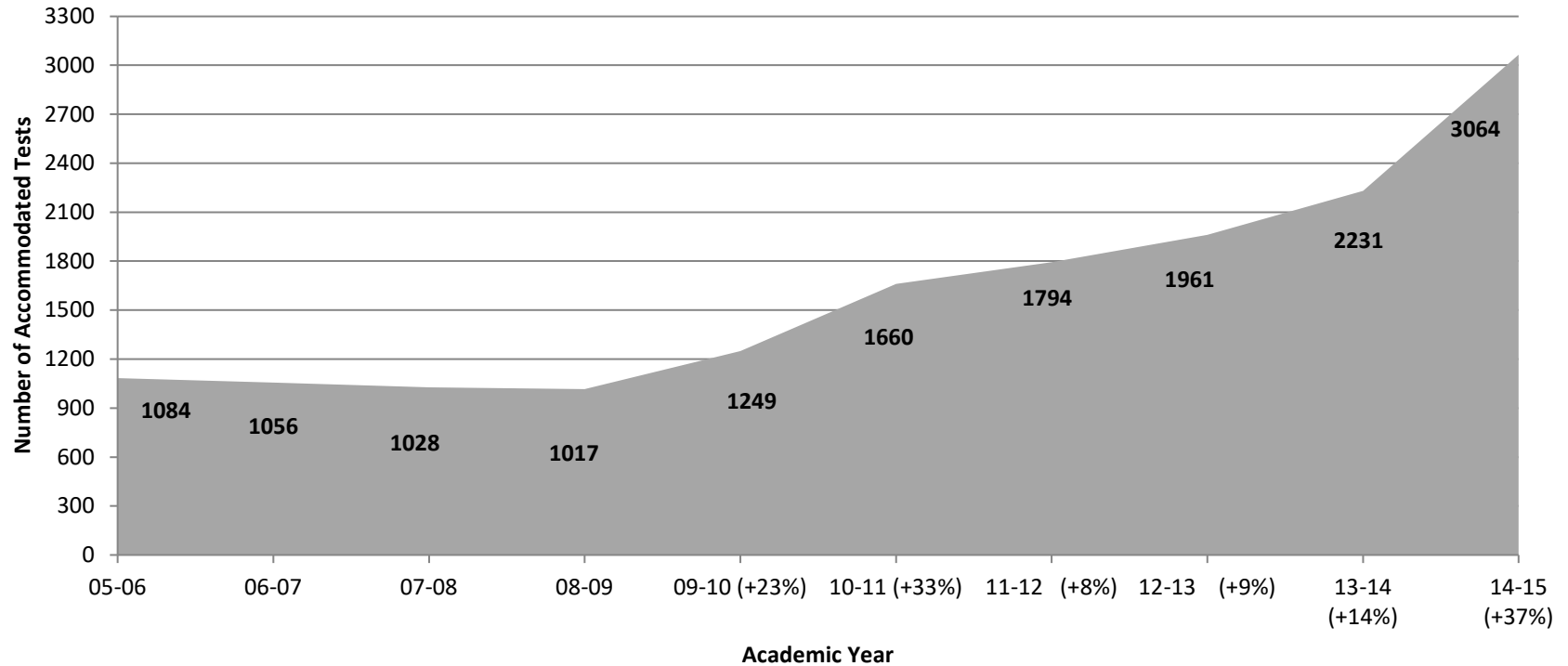
Disability	Approx. # of UDSS students*
ADD/ADHD	118
Autism Spectrum Disorder	22
Brain Injury	25
Cen. Aud. Processing	2
Emotional	89
Hand Function	2
Migraines	6
Learning Disabilities	104
Hearing	10
Medical/Ortho	82
Seizures	6
Visual	11

*This accounts for only the first disability disclosed by students. It does not include students with multiple diagnosis(es).



UDSS Testing Statistics

UW Disability Support Services - Increases and % Growth in Accommodated Tests Provided Annually



UDSS has 17 designated seats for testing.



Accommodations

- Adjustments to provide equal access for individuals with disabilities.
- Classroom accommodations allow students with disabilities an equal opportunity to demonstrate course knowledge and mastery.
- Accommodations “level the playing field”.
- Are meant to provide “access”, not guarantee “success”.
- Accommodations are determined based on the functional limitations of the individual student.
- Are determined on a course-by-course basis.
- Are meant to be a collaborative process between, UDSS, the student and the faculty member.

UDSS responsibilities

- Provide leadership and assistance to UW to comply with federal laws requiring physical and program accessibility.
- Review documentation of disability for eligibility and determine appropriate accommodations.
- Provide services in a timely fashion.
- Assist faculty and staff with implementation of accommodations.
- Provide assistance to faculty, staff and university administration.
- Serve as a liaison for the interactive process around accommodations.

Student Responsibilities

- Self-identify to UDSS and provide appropriate documentation.
- Consult with UDSS coordinator to request and identify appropriate accommodations.
- Provide UDSS with copies of course syllabi as needed for accommodation logistics.
- Assume the same responsibility as fellow students for: academic standards, attendance, participation, and adhering to the Student Code of Conduct. However, some of these may be affected by approved accommodations.
- Self-advocate appropriately.

Faculty Responsibilities

- Collaborate with UDSS to provide approved accommodations in a fair and timely manner.
- Maintain student confidentiality.
- Include a course syllabus statement regarding UDSS (UW Regulation 6-809).
- Contact UDSS for any concerns regarding accommodations and the impact on course objectives.
- Strive to create all materials in an accessible format.

Sample Syllabus Statement

“If you have a physical, learning, sensory or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You will need to register with, and possibly provide documentation of your disability to University Disability Support Services (UDSS) in 109 Knight Hall. You may also contact them by phone at 766-6189 or udss@uwyo.edu. Visit their website for more information: www.uwyo.edu/udss”. This, or its equivalent, is required to be in all course syllabi pursuant to UW Regulations.



For Faculty

- Accommodations do not have to be provided to a student without notification from UDSS.
- Retroactive accommodations are not given in most circumstances.
- Unreasonable accommodations such as fundamental alterations:
 - If faculty are concerned that a requested accommodation is unreasonable or may create a fundamental alteration to the course policy or learning objectives, faculty should contact UDSS immediately for further discussion.

Reasonableness of Requested Accommodations

- A requested accommodation may be deemed unreasonable by the University in limited circumstances.
- The burden is on the University to demonstrate unreasonableness. This is a high standard to meet.

Examples of Unreasonable Requests

- *May* include those that would create a fundamental alteration, e.g. adjustments that alter an essential aspect of the course or program requirements, or are an undue burden to the University.
 - For example: if your course requires class participation as the only way to gain information necessary for learning, flexible attendance may not be appropriate.

- If you receive notice of an accommodation that you believe is unreasonable, e.g. you believe it fundamentally alters your course objectives/requirements, call the UDSS coordinator immediately to discuss.

Scenario

- UDSS has contacted you the first week of classes regarding a student who qualifies for attendance/deadline flexibility. By week 7, the student has attended class once and insists they are exempt from your class requirement of no more than 4 missed classes.
 - Are you required to allow this student to continue missing class as an accommodation?

Scenario-Discussion

- Not necessarily-call UDSS
 - Decisions regarding an acceptable amount of absences should be determined upon notification and the extent to which students learn from each other throughout the course.
 - Each case is analyzed based on the specific facts and course.
 - If information presented in class cannot be made available to students by any other method, or without significant one-on-one instruction, The University may consider whether continued absences would be a fundamental alteration to the course.

Scenario 1-Discussion, cont.

- If you are flexible regarding deadline extensions and/or attendance expectations for other students, the same should be considered for the student with a disability.
- If a student has not contacted you, or their coordinator regarding absences, the course attendance policy may be applied.

Accommodation Overview

- Students can choose when to use accommodations and for which courses. This can change during the semester and accommodations may be implemented at any time (if requested in a timely fashion).
- Accommodations are designed provide access; they do not guarantee success.
- Accommodations should not decrease program standards.
- Accommodations do not include personal care attendants or personal devices (such as glasses or hearing aids).
- Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without receiving information from UDSS.

Scenario

- UDSS has notified you that a student needs additional testing time in the UDSS office for your course. The student approaches you after class and indicates that they need extensions on all homework assignments. Does the extended test time letter cover this?

Scenario-Discussion

- No. If a student is eligible for attendance/deadline flexibility, the letter will state this specifically or you will be notified in a separate letter.
- However; if you choose to work with the student independently to adjust deadlines *as you would for any other student* and pursuant to your own class policies, you are free to do so.

Discussion, cont.

- If you are unsure about student requests: call UDSS; adjustments to your class policies/course made due to a student's disability without the student going through the UDSS process and approval are not considered accommodations. It is important that any student who requests modifications to your policies due to a disability be referred back to UDSS.

Examples of Common Accommodations

- Testing
 - Extended time
 - Least distracting environment
 - Software such as screen readers
- Alternative format
 - Text in audio, enlarged font, etc.
- Communication Access
 - Interpreters/transcribers
 - Captioning of videos

Additional examples of accommodations

- With appropriate documentation, other individually-tailored accommodations may include:
 - Consideration to attendance policy and/or deadline flexibility
 - This is not an open-ended arrangement, but determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - Classroom relocation
 - Recorded lectures
 - Etc.

Implementing Accommodations

- Students must meet with their UDSS coordinator each semester to request accommodations. Accommodations are determined on a course-by-course, semester-by-semester basis and do not automatically extend to subsequent semesters (even if a student has had the same instructor previously).
- Faculty will receive a letter for each accommodation the student is eligible to receive.
- Faculty should refer students to UDSS if they are requesting accommodations, but no information has been received from UDSS.
- Retroactive accommodations are not typically given.

Testing Accommodations

- Students are asked to bring all course syllabi when they meet with their coordinator.
 - To identify test dates for the semester
 - To identify time conflicts
- Test Accommodation policies can be found at:
<http://www.uwyo.edu/udss/accommodations-and-services/test-accommodations.html>
- Extended exam time does not carry over to extensions on assignments, projects, etc. unless specifically conveyed by UDSS.



Testing

- The UDSS coordinator will:
 - Send faculty the Test Accommodation letter via email,
 - Schedule the student's exams based on course syllabus
 - It is the responsibility of the student to notify UDSS of exam date changes or conflicts as well as to schedule upcoming exams a minimum of five (5) days in advance.
 - Failure to confirm exams in advance may result in the student being sent to class with the exam being administered as it is for all other students (i.e. without accommodations, unless you are able to provide them).

Testing

- SEO Main Office staff will:
 - Contact instructors approximately two (2) days before each upcoming exam.
 - Secure exams until test time.
 - Return completed exams as requested by faculty.
 - Maintain a test return log.

Testing

- Faculty should:
 - Notify UDSS of exam details: what students are allowed to use, how the exam will be delivered/return preferences and any other information necessary to proctor the exam.
 - This can be done for each exam, or as a reply to the initial Test Accommodation letter sent by the coordinator.
 - Notify UDSS of any concerns regarding the accommodation or proctoring.
 - Exam times/lengths are scheduled based on the syllabi information-if you offer more time in class, please notify UDSS to allow for proper scheduling

Testing

- Due to the increasing demands for testing accommodations and limited UDSS resources, completed exams will be returned twice daily. If you need the exam sooner:
 - UDSS can scan and email the completed exam and return the paper copy during the return run, or
 - The exam can be picked up in 109 Knight Hall.

Alternative Format

- Alternative format is provided for students who have visual impairments, certain learning disabilities or other conditions affecting access to print materials.
- Faculty are not typically notified of students using this accommodation unless UDSS needs to request supplemental materials, access to the reading schedule or other information.

Alternative Format, cont.

- Students are responsible for purchasing a copy of the textbook and providing the course syllabus to their coordinator.
 - Occasionally, UDSS will request a reading schedule from faculty in an effort to begin production before classes start. In these cases, a tentative schedule is helpful and appreciated.

Communication Access

- If a student requires the use of a sign language interpreter or transcriber, you will be notified as soon as we become aware.
- You will receive a letter from UDSS outlining best practices for working with a provider in the classroom.

Flexible Deadlines

- Often the most difficult accommodation to navigate.
- May be a factor for students with an accommodation for attendance.
- With appropriate documentation, UDSS may determine this is a reasonable accommodation and will notify faculty. However; each occurrence/absence should be evaluated individually.

Flexible Deadlines, cont.

- When a student becomes aware that a deadline may be missed:
 - They should notify their UDSS coordinator who will discuss the situation with the student.
 - If the situation is reasonable, the UDSS coordinator will then notify the instructor to discuss the situation and appropriate deadline extension while considering the course objectives and faculty input.
 - UDSS will then convey the final decision to the student.

Attendance Policy Flexibility

- Generally considered for students with medical conditions that may flare unexpectedly.
- To determine if this accommodation may alter your course requirements, the following questions may be asked of you:
 - What does the course description and syllabus say about attendance as a factor of the course grade?
 - What classroom interaction between the instructor and students and/or among students exists that impacts the educational experience?
 - Does the course rely on student participation as a method for learning?
 - Is there content only offered in class?
 - Are assignments used as class content when they are due?
 - How many additional disability-related absences (if any) would you be willing to allow before a student is no longer able to successfully master the material in the course?



Temporary Impairments

- Temporary Impairments are not typically protected under the ADA but determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- UDSS does not provide medical excuses; doctor's notes should be provided to faculty by the student.
- UDSS may offer temporary assistance if students need extended time for exams, use of a scribe, notetaking assistance, etc. during recovery time.

Outreach Course Accommodations

- UDSS will also assist with facilitation for Outreach students or on-campus students taking Outreach courses.
 - Specific accommodations and instructions for adjusting online exams will be shared by UDSS coordinators.
 - Process is very similar to on-campus accommodations.

Service Animals

- *Service animals*-defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.
 - *Service animals are not required to have certification or be identified by vests or badges.*
 - *Miniature horses may qualify for similar access granted to service animals, but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance to applicable laws and regulations*

Service Animals, cont.

- Only two questions can be asked:
 - Is the animal required because of a disability?
 - What tasks is the animal trained to do relating to the disability?

Support Animals (ESA)

- *Assistance animals*-required for emotional support, not typically allowed outside of housing.
- If you have questions regarding animals in the classroom, please contact UDSS.

Discrimination

- If a student alleges discrimination or retaliation based on disability accommodations, a report must be made to:

Equal Opportunity Report and Response (EORR)
Bureau of Mines 319
766-5200



Thanks to...

Format and information for this presentation was developed from materials used at:

- Long Island University
- University of Alabama at Birmingham

And shared by:

- University of North Carolina at Pembroke
- Austin Community College, Highland Campus

