

**Disability Services Handbook:**  
**A North Carolina School of the Arts**  
**Faculty Guide to Teaching Students**  
**With Disabilities**



We believe that students should feel comfortable seeking help when they need it. Arts and Academic class are of the foremost importance to our students and so is their mental and physical health. Our primary objective is to enhance the students' pursuit of these goals, but occasionally these pursuits conflict. Counseling and Disability Services staff will try conscientiously to avoid scheduling students during their class or rehearsal time; please understand that scheduling conflicts may be necessary for timely care to be provided.

Students may not deliberately schedule appointments for the sake of avoiding class or rehearsal. Any necessary scheduling conflicts should be a minor occurrence, not a frequent one. ***In the event that scheduling conflicts are necessary, no student shall be penalized or threatened with a penalty for seeking medical or mental health treatment during class/rehearsal time.*** If a student must make a future appointment for mental or physical care, and ample time exists for the faculty member to be informed, students will be provided with a note indicating their appointment time that may be shown to faculty. Counselors may not confirm nor deny that a student scheduled an appointment with the Counseling Center or has been seen without the expressed written permission from the student. Exceptions to this level of confidentiality would include, but not be limited to, situations where the student's health and safety are compromised or that of the NCSA community. During such events, specific information will be shared with those individuals for whom it has been determined have a need to know.

## Table of Contents

<b>Faculty and Staff Handbook Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Factors, Rights, and Responsibilities of Students and of the North Carolina School of the Arts.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recognizing, Assisting and Referring Students in Distress: A Guide for Faculty and Staff at .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>High School Accommodation Request Process .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Undergraduate and Graduate Accommodation Request Process .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Confidentiality and Release of Information by the Student.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Learning Disability Description.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Accommodations for Eligible Students with Learning Disabilities.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (AD/HD) Description.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Psychiatric Disability Description .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Teaching Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Temporary Conditions .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Students with Disabilities and Related Attendance Issues .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>FAQ .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## **Faculty and Staff Handbook Introduction**

Welcome to the Faculty and Staff Handbook for Disability Services. This handbook is designed as a resource for faculty as they prepare to teach students with disabilities. This handbook is a practical guide that includes: the high school referral process, laws and regulations, possible accommodations and also student responsibilities. Each section is designed to help faculty members quickly find the answers to their questions.

The handbook will cover the following categories of disabilities: Attention Deficient and Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), Learning Disabilities (LD), Blindness and Low Vision, Deafness and Hard of Hearing, Psychiatric Impairments, Mobility and Health Impairments and Temporary Disabilities. Please contact the Director of Counseling and Disability Services or the Learning Specialist for more information on a specific disability.

## **Contacts**

### **Dr. Thomas Murray**

Director of Counseling and Disability Services

Telephone: 336-770-3277

Fax: 336-770-1492

E-Mail: [murrayt@ncarts.edu](mailto:murrayt@ncarts.edu)

### **Denise Lewis**

Learning Specialist

127 Kenan Student Life Center

Telephone: 336-770-1453

Fax: 336-770-1316

E-Mail: [lewisd@ncarts.edu](mailto:lewisd@ncarts.edu)

### **Chenetta West (High School Faculty Only)**

Guidance Counselor, High School Academic Program

Telephone: 336-770-1320

Fax: 336-770-1314

E-Mail: [westc@ncarts.edu](mailto:westc@ncarts.edu)

## **Factors, Rights, and Responsibilities of Students and of the North Carolina School of the Arts**

### **Factors at the Post-Secondary Level:**

- Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

### **THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973**

**Section 504**--Section 504 is a program access statute. It provides that: *No otherwise qualified individual with disabilities in the United States . . . shall solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in or be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance . . .*

The Section 504 mandate has promoted the development of the disability support service programs in colleges and universities across the country. Subpart E of Section 504 deals specifically with the mandate for institutions of higher education. While it does not require special educational programming for students with disabilities, it does require that an institution be prepared *to make appropriate academic accommodations and reasonable modifications to policies and practices to allow the participation of students with disabilities in the same program and activities available to non-disabled students.* This means that the institutions are under no obligation to assure the success of students with disabilities in higher education, only to assure that such students have the same opportunities as other students to be successful on the basis of their intellectual abilities and academic achievements.

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that became effective for public entities on January 26, 1992. The ADA provides comprehensive civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, state and local governmental services, and telecommunications. ADA strengthens Section 504 by extending coverage to all organizations not previously covered. ADA also lists HIV status and contagious and non-contagious diseases as disabilities.

Please Note: While ADA protects students against discrimination because of a disability, it does not release students from meeting the same essential qualifications that all students applying to NCSA must meet for admission. Each school should publish a list of qualities deemed essential for admission and success in their program.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

### **Rights of Students with Disabilities:**

- Equal access to courses, programs, services and activities
- "Reasonable" accommodations
- Right to File a Grievance/Complaint

### **Responsibilities of Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities:**

- Meet qualifications
- Self-identify
- Provide current documentation
- Follow established institutional procedures (see procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations)
- Request accommodations each term in a timely manner by completing the Accommodation Request form and meeting with the Director of Counseling and Disability Services.

NOTE: Receiving services or accommodations at the high school level, at another college or university, or testing agency does not mean necessarily that the North Carolina School of the Arts will conclude that the student is disabled and/or agree to provide the student with the same services or accommodations received at other educational institutions. Each case file will be reviewed individually and determinations will be made based on current documentation. NCSA qualifies current documentation as within 1 year for medial/psychiatric diagnosis and 3 years for learning disabilities.

### **Responsibilities of the North Carolina School of the Arts:**

- Give notice of available services
- Ensure that programs, services, and activities when viewed in their entirety are accessible
- Explore and provide appropriate reasonable accommodations
- Ensure that all information will be maintained and used in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements

### **Rights of the North Carolina School of the Arts:**

- Identify and establish core competencies and technical standards
- Request and receive current documentation
- Determine reasonable accommodations
- Make determinations of eligibility, admissibility, and continuing ability matriculate

# **Recognizing, Assisting and Referring Students in Distress: A Guide for Faculty and Staff at North Carolina School of the Arts**

As a faculty or staff member at North Carolina School of the Arts, you are in the unique position of having ongoing and direct contact with students and can identify and help students that are in crisis. While most students cope effectively with the artistic and academic demands at NCSA, for some, the pressures can be overwhelming and unmanageable. This is especially true if stress is coupled with or inter-related with other personal issues such as social, developmental, family, work, or financial problems.

A person who is seen as caring and trustworthy may be a potential resource in times of trouble. The purpose of this guide is to help you recognize some of the symptoms of student distress and to provide some specific options for intervention and for referral to NCSA resources. Counseling Services is available to assist you with problem situations and to consult with you on whether or not to intervene with a particular student. Remember, your role is to provide support and a referral when support is not enough to assist a student. You do not have to get involved beyond what seems comfortable or appropriate.

**\*Some situations require immediate intervention.** If a student is in a state of high agitation, appears disoriented or incoherent, is threatening any one else's safety, or expresses an intent to harm or kill him or herself, seek immediate help by calling Counseling Services at (770-3288) or Campus Police. After 5 p.m. weekdays and on weekends, call Campus Police.

## **Symptoms of Distress**

**Any behavior that is different from the norm or represents a change for that student can be a symptom of distress. Symptoms include:**

- Poor performance or preparation
- Excessive absences or tardiness
- Repeated requests for special consideration
- Looking tired, poorly groomed, or high or intoxicated
- Appearing anxious, angry, upset, or depressed or having trouble controlling emotions
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Social isolation
- Unusual irritability
- Constant complaints of physical illness not supported by medical evidence
- Direct requests for help or assistance

## Providing Support and Making a Referral

- **Initiate** contact with the student by asking him or her to meet you at a time that is convenient for both of you with adequate time to talk. Find a quiet, private setting in which to talk.
- **Express** your concern for the student in nonjudgmental terms and focus on observed behavior. (e.g. “I have noticed that you have missed a lot of classes lately and I am concerned about you” rather than “Missing class again? Where have you been?” “Goofing off?”) Let the student know that you are concerned for him or her, not expressing criticism.
- **Listen** to the students’ thoughts and feelings. Communicate your understanding by repeating back to them a gist of what he or she has shared with you. (e.g. It sounds like your feeling overwhelmed right now juggling the demands of the program, academics and your job.”) Allow the student to talk.
- **Avoid** judging, evaluating, or criticizing the student even when they ask for advice or your opinion. You may not agree with the student’s values or beliefs, but you do not want to push them away.
- **Help** the student see that there are options. Suggest resources such as family, friends, clergy or a professional counselor on campus for support.
- **Reassure** the student that seeking help is not a sign of weakness or an inability to solve one’s own problem. No problem is too big or small to ask for help or seek counseling.
- **Inform** the student that Counseling Services is confidential (this means that information shared during counseling sessions cannot be released without the student’s permission. Exceptions are when the student is under 18 years old and if the student threatens to harm him/herself or someone else). Counseling Services are free of charge.
- **Give** the student information on how to set up an appointment. Give the student the phone number to Counseling Services (770-3288) or tell him or her to stop by the Wellness Center office to set up an appointment. Allow the student to call from your office or offer to accompany the student to set up an appointment if they do not want to do it alone.
- If you believe that the student is in crisis and in need of immediate assistance, call the Wellness Center and tell them you have an “emergency” situation and need to speak to a counselor. Same day appointments can be made for emergency situations.
- **Follow up** with the student later to check in on how he or she is doing. Provide appropriate support as necessary.

\* If you have further questions on how to help a student in distress, please call Counseling Services at 770-3288. We will be happy to assist you.

The information in this handout was adapted from the following resources:

<http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/vpc.html>

*Referral Guide for Faculty and Staff*: Counseling Services, University of Buffalo, New York

*Students in Distress: A Guide for Faculty and Staff*: University Counseling Center, The George Washington University, Washington DC

*Tips on Recognizing and Assisting Students in Emotional Distress*: University Counseling and Psychological Service, Oregon Sate University

## High School Accommodation Request Process

The High School Guidance Counselor is the contact for HS students with documented and suspected learning disabilities. The Guidance Counselor will evaluate the referral and then take appropriate action. This many include an additional referral to the Director of Counseling and Disability Services.

The Learning Specialist is available to provide individual assistance to students with learning difficulties. Students who have documented learning disabilities are given priority over other referrals.

High School students with disabilities who want services must fill out the appropriate Documentation Form which should then be submitted to the High School Guidance Counselor. When a high school student fills out the form it will be sent automatically to the Arts Dean and the Dean for High School Programs.

Documentation must be current (within the last three years for learning disabilities and one year for mental or physical disabilities) and the appropriate assessments must be present in the evaluation. For detailed information on testing requirements please follow the links below:

- [ADD Documentation Requirements](#)
- [LD Documentation Requirements](#)
- [Medical Documentation Requirements](#)
- [Affective and Anxiety Disorders Documentation Requirements](#)

### Faculty Referral Process for High School Students

#### Phase I

- Faculty Member will fill out the form provided by the High School Guidance Counselor.
- The High School Guidance Counselor will review the form and follow one of the steps below:
  - Make recommendations to the faculty member based on her observations and experiences.
  - Referral to Learning Specialist for Time Management and/or Study Skills.

#### Phase II

- High School Guidance Counselor will review the referral, and if the steps in Phase I are not working (documented by faculty member's observations), the counselor then may forward the information to the Director of Counseling and Disability Services for further recommendations. Copies will also be sent to the Learning Specialist, Director of HS Academics, Dean for High School Programs and referring faculty member(s).
  - The Director of Counseling and Disability Services will determine the next step in the referral process: Testing, referral to the learning specialist for tutoring or other measures, etc.

## **Undergraduate and Graduate Accommodation Request Process**

The Director of Counseling and Disability Services is the contact for all questions regarding disability status.

The Learning Specialist is available to provide individual assistance to students with learning difficulties. Students who have documented learning disabilities are given priority over other referrals.

**Undergraduate/Graduate students** will submit documentation to the Director of Counseling and Disability Services who will then review the materials. When the Director of Counseling and Disability Services has reviewed the required documentation and made the determination that NCSA faculty and staff must accommodate the student's disability, the student will notify the faculty of the required accommodations sought. The student may or may not choose to disclose a disability to all parties mentioned.

1. Student must have a major medical or mental health impairment or learning disability that affects daily activities, which has been appropriately assessed and diagnosed by a qualified healthcare professional.
2. The Director of Counseling and Disability Services must obtain a copy of all current documents pertaining to the registered disability. Go to <http://www.ncarts.edu/students/forms.htm> to find the appropriate documentation requirements for various diagnoses.
3. Student **MUST** make an appointment with the Director of Counseling and Disability Services to discuss accommodations, review submitted information, and acquire the accommodation letter to be signed by faculty from whom accommodations are sought.
4. No personnel from Counseling and Disability Services will discuss accommodation needs without the student's expressed, written permission using the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) form, which is available upon request.
5. Students are encouraged to report back to the Director of Counseling and Disability Services to assess the progress of studies and to gauge the effectiveness of accommodations.
6. Steps 3-6 **MUST** be repeated EACH TRIMESTER.

### **Faculty Referral Process for Undergraduate/Graduate Students**

- If a student discloses a disability to you and requests accommodations, please send the student to see the Director of Counseling and Disability Services.

Please Note: The Director of Counseling Services and the Learning Specialist welcome faculty and staffs' insights and dialogue about student difficulties, but until a student has signed a FERPA release all information must remain confidential. See the section on FERPA rights for more details.

## **Confidentiality and Release of Information by the Student**

The Director of Counseling and Disability Services is committed to ensuring that all information regarding a student, including information obtained in diagnostic and medical reports, is maintained as required by law and confidentiality requirements. Information related to a student's disability, including reports from medical doctors and psychologists should be forwarded to:

Director of Counseling and Disability Services  
NC School of the Arts  
1533 S. Main Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27127  
Fax: 336-770-1492  
Telephone: 336-770-3277

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

**Disability information is never a part of any directory information released.**

*In order for the learning specialist and/or counselors to discuss a disability with staff, faculty members or parents of an "eligible student" must present a FERPA waiver, which is signed by the student. The student must name the parties to whom the information may be released. The [Disability Services Waiver](#) will be used for such purposes. An undergraduate/graduate student must request an accommodation letter each trimester; therefore, at the end of each term the faculty's authorization to discuss the student's accommodations and disability is terminated. A new waiver must be in place before those discussions may resume.*

- Once a waiver is signed the faculty member may discuss concerns and accommodations with the parties named in the waiver. Discussing the student with fellow faculty members is prohibited without the written consent of the student.
- Faculty members who collaborate on grades and juries may share information on a need to know basis.

## **Learning Disability Description**

A learning disability is a deficiency in the processing of information that affects understanding, perceiving, and/or the use of language and concepts. This disability may manifest itself in listening, thinking, speaking, writing, reading, and spelling. It is neither an intellectual impairment nor an emotional problem. These disabilities are intrinsic to the individual and may be evident throughout their life span. Each student with a learning disability has his or her own set of characteristics; one student is not necessarily like another.

While a learning disability cannot be cured, a student with a learning disability can be assisted greatly through instructional intervention and compensatory strategies. A variety of instructional modes that incorporate audio, visual and/or hands-on interaction can enhance learning for students with learning disabilities. Colleges and universities are required by federal law to ensure program access by providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations; however, fundamental alterations to the essential characteristics of a curriculum are not required. If a faculty member believes an accommodation listed in a student's accommodation letter would change the fundamental nature of the course or program, he or she should contact the Director of Counseling and Disability Services immediately. Accommodations for students with learning disabilities vary and are determined by the form of learning disabilities present (as identified by the student's documentation), by the individual's coping strategies, by the manner in which course material is presented and/or assessed, and how performance is assessed.

### **Definition of Learning Disabilities**

A learning disability is a disorder which affects the manner in which individuals with normal intelligence take in, retain, and express information.

### ***Reading Skills***

- Slow reading rate and /or difficulty in modifying reading rate in accordance with material's level of difficulty
- Uneven comprehension and retention of material read
- Difficulty identifying important points and themes
- Incomplete mastery of phonics, confusion of similar words, and difficulty integrating new vocabulary
- Skips words or lines of printed material
- Difficulty reading for long periods of time

### ***Written Language Skills***

- Difficulty planning a topic and organizing thoughts on paper
- Difficulty with sentence structure (e.g., incomplete sentences, run-ons, poor use of grammar, and missing inflectional endings)
- Frequent spelling errors (e.g., omissions, substitutions, transpositions), especially in specialized and foreign vocabulary
- Difficulty effectively proofreading written work and making revisions
- Compositions are often limited in length
- Slow written production

- Poor penmanship (e.g., poorly formed letters, incorrect use of capitalization, trouble with spacing, and overly large handwriting)
- Inability to copy correctly from a book or the blackboard

### ***Oral language skills***

- Inability to concentrate on and to comprehend spoken language when presented rapidly
- Difficulty orally expressing concepts that they seem to understand
- Difficulty speaking grammatically correct English
- Difficulty following or having a conversation about an unfamiliar idea
- Difficulty telling a story in the proper sequence
- Difficulty following oral or written directions
- Difficulty telling a story in the proper sequence

### ***Mathematical Skills***

- Incomplete mastery of basic facts (e.g. mathematical tables)
- Reverses numbers (e.g., 123 to 321 or 231)
- Confused operational symbols, especially + and x.
- Copies problems incorrectly from one line to another
- Difficulty recalling the sequence of operational concepts
- Difficulty understanding key concepts and applications to aid problem solving

### ***Organizational and Study Skills***

- Difficulty with organization skills
- Time management difficulties
- Slow to start and complete tasks
- Repeated inability, on a day-to-day basis, to recall what has been taught
- Lack of overall organization in taking notes
- Difficulty interpreting charts and graphs
- Inefficient use of library and reference materials
- Difficulty preparing for and taking tests

### ***Attention and Concentration***

- Difficulty focusing and sustaining attention on academic tasks
- Fluctuating attention span during lectures
- Easily distracted by outside stimuli
- Difficulty juggling multiple tasks
- Hyperactivity and excessive movements may accompany the inability to focus attention

## **Accommodations for Eligible Students with Learning Disabilities**

Requests made for classroom accommodations must be authorized through the Director of Counseling and Disability Services. If a student requests accommodations the request should be verified through the appropriate contact person.

**High School Faculty** will receive accommodations from the High School Guidance Counselor.

**Undergraduate/Graduate students** are responsible for requesting and discussing accommodations with their faculty. The [accommodation form](#) must be **completed each term** and turned in to the Director of Counseling and Disability Services.

### **Common accommodations include, but are not limited to:**

- Extended time for in-class examinations
- Minimal distraction area for in-class examinations
- Test scribe for in-class examinations
- Note taker
- Tape recorder
- Priority seating
- Books and materials in alternative format

### **Alternative Format**

Some of these students need print material in an alternative format. When a faculty member is contacted by a student and/or the learning specialist requesting information regarding required textbooks, reading materials and other reading expectations for an up-coming course, it is important that the information be provided immediately. It is also important that textbook orders be submitted to the NCSA bookstore on or before the bookstore deadline. In addition, a syllabus for the course may also be requested to facilitate obtaining and converting materials into an alternative format. It takes a considerable amount of time to obtain and convert materials into an alternative format.

### **Suggestions**

The following strategies can enhance learning for students with a learning disability as well as for other students.

### **Multi-Modality Instruction**

A multi-modality approach to instruction assists these students in finding a modality that is consistent with their learning strength. Providing important information and an assignment in both oral and written formats helps avoid confusion.

### **Study Aids**

Study questions, study guides, opportunities for questions and answers, and review sessions help students who need frequent repetition.

### **Assistance with Structure**

A syllabus with clearly delineated expectations and due dates helps these students understand the conceptual organizational structure of the course. Providing students with frequent opportunities for feedback can also be helpful.

### **Examinations, Tests and Quizzes**

Make exam, test and quiz results available for the student to review.

## **Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (AD/HD) Description**

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity that is more frequent and severe than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development. Students with AD/HD may have difficulty with concentration, distractibility, organization, task-completion, and sedentary tasks such as reading and/or planning. AD/HD arises during childhood (symptoms appear at or before the age of seven). Some students with AD/HD are prescribed medication for their condition.

Accommodations for students with AD/HD vary, determined by the severity of AD/HD (as identified by the student's documentation), the individual's coping strategies, the manner in which course material is presented and/or assessed, and how the course is assessed.

### **Common accommodations include, but are not limited to:**

- Extended time for in-class examinations
- Minimal distraction area for in-class examinations
- Note taker
- Tape recorder
- Priority seating

### **Testing Accommodations**

Accommodations are determined on individualized basis according to the nature of the disability and the academic environment. Academic accommodations include, but are not limited to the following:

- Extended Time (generally time and one half)
- Minimal distraction area for in-class tests and examinations
- Scribe
- Reader
- Computer

### **Classroom Support**

- Books and materials in an alternative format\*

**\*Alternative format:** Some students need print material in an alternative format. When a student and/or the Learning Specialist request information regarding required textbooks, reading materials and other reading expectations for an up-coming course, it is important that the information be provided immediately. In addition, a syllabus for the course may also be requested to facilitate obtaining and converting materials into an alternative format. It takes a considerable amount of time to obtain and convert materials into an alternative format.

## **Psychiatric Disability Description**

Students with psychiatric disabilities who are registered with the Director of Counseling and Disability Services generally have a persistent psychological impairment that adversely affects their educational access, their academic performance, and/or daily functioning. These students may be prescribed medication. Psychiatric impairments include, but are not limited to: depression, bipolar disability, anxiety disability, and schizophrenia. In most situations, a faculty member will not be aware that a student with a psychiatric impairment is in his or her class. Because students do not show any outward sign of the impairment does not mean that their impairment is any less disabling than a more visible impairment. Many of these students are fearful of and have faced stigmatization because of their impairment. Some do not need or request any accommodations, while others require a variety of accommodations. For some, the impairment is chronic and episodic in nature and requires accommodations only when the individual is experiencing symptoms during a psychiatric episode.

### **Make-up Work**

When students are experiencing a serious episode, he or she may miss class, assignments, and examinations. In these instances, please refer the student to the Director of Counseling and Disability Services who will assist the student in getting appropriate medical documentation. The director will also work with appropriate faculty, deans, et cetera, to determine reasonable accommodations.

We believe that students should feel comfortable seeking help when they need it. Arts and Academic classes are of the foremost importance to our students and so is their mental and physical health. Our primary objective is to enhance the students' pursuit of these goals, but occasionally, these pursuits conflict. Counseling staff will try conscientiously to avoid scheduling students during their class or rehearsal time; please understand that scheduling conflicts may be necessary for timely care to be provided

Students may not schedule appointments deliberately for the sake of avoiding class or rehearsal. Any necessary scheduling conflicts should be a minor occurrence, not a frequent one. If a student must make a future appointment for mental or physical care, and ample time exists for the faculty member to be informed, students will be provided with a note indicating their appointment time that may be shown to faculty. Counselors may not confirm nor deny that a student scheduled with the Counseling Center or has been seen without the expressed written permission from the student. Exceptions to this level of confidentiality would include, but not be limited to, situations where the student's health and safety are compromised or that of the NCSA community. During such events, specific information will be shared with those individuals for whom it has been determined have a need to know.

### **Accommodations**

Colleges and universities are required by federal law to ensure program access by providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations. If a faculty member believes an accommodation listed in a student's accommodation letter would change the fundamental nature of the course or program, he or she should contact the Director of Counseling and Disability Services immediately. Accommodations for students with psychological impairments vary and are

determined by the specific impairment as identified in the student's documentation, symptoms and/or side effects from medications.

**Common accommodations include, but are not limited to:**

- Extended time for in-class examinations
- Minimal distraction area for in-class examinations
- Preferential Seating
- Note taker
- Extensions for Assignments (decision made on an assignment-by-assignment basis in consultation with the student's faculty member and medical professional)
- Rescheduled Examinations (decision made on an examination by examination basis in consultation with the student's faculty member and medical professional)

**Welcoming and Supportive Environment**

Many students with psychiatric disabilities fear stigmatization because of their impairment. If a student shares his or her impairment with an instructor, please be supportive.

**Behavior**

Students with psychiatric impairments must follow the same behavior requirements as students without psychiatric impairments.

**Confidentiality**

Allow the student the same anonymity as other students (i.e., avoid pointing out the student or the alternative arrangements to the rest of the class). Failure to do so is a violation of ADA and may result in litigation.

**Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

**Culturally deaf** people are members of a distinct linguistic and cultural minority. The members of this cultural group use American Sign Language as their first language. Therefore, members of this cultural group are bilingual and use English as their second language. As with any cultural group, people who are deaf have their own values, social norms, and traditions. Because of this, be sensitive and attentive to cross-cultural information in the mainstreamed classroom setting. Students who are culturally deaf may use American Sign Language interpreters in the classroom setting. Telecommunication devices for people who are deaf (TDDs) are available.

**Hard of hearing** refers to those individuals who may use speech, lip reading, and hearing aids to enhance oral communications. Hearing aids or amplification systems may include public address systems and transmitter/receiver systems with a clip-on microphone for the instructor. For those who use lip reading, only 30 –40% of spoken English is comprehensible even for those who are highly skilled.

For people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing who choose to speak, feedback mechanisms are limited; therefore vocal control, volume, and articulation may be affected. These secondary effects are physical and should not be viewed as mental or intellectual weaknesses.

Indications that a student has a hearing loss may include a student's straining to hear, use of loud or distorted speech, and consistent failure to respond.

A variety of services are available to students who are hard of hearing.

### **Things to Keep in Mind when Working with Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing will benefit from front row seating. An unobstructed line of vision is necessary for students who use interpreters and for those who rely on lip reading and visual cues. If an interpreter is used, the student's view should include the interpreter and instructor.
- Keep your face within view of the student and speak in a natural tone.
- When using an interpreter, speak directly to the student and not to the interpreter.
- Recognize the processing time that the interpreter takes to translate a message from its original language (whether English to American Sign Language or vice versa) because this will cause a delay in the student's receiving information, asking questions and/or offering comments.
- Repeat questions and remarks of other people in the room.
- Use visual aids and the chalkboard to reinforce spoken presentations when possible.
- If requested, assist the student with identifying a note-taker.
- When possible, provide the student with class outlines, lecture notes, lists of new technical terms and printed transcripts of audio-visual materials.
- Do not hesitate to communicate with the student in writing when conveying important information such as assignments, scheduling, deadlines, etc.
- Try to keep background noise to a minimum. The classroom door may need to be closed.
- Do not single this student out and call attention to a disability.

### **Teaching Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired**

Visual impairment varies greatly. A person is considered legally blind when visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of corrective lenses. Many people who are legally blind may have visual memory. Its strength depends on the age when vision was lost.

#### **Common accommodations include, but are not limited to:**

- Alternative print formats (Braille, audio tape, large print or electronic text)
- Magnification devices (CCTV's and hand-held magnifiers)
- Bright incandescent lighting
- Tactile cues on materials and equipment
- Adaptive computer equipment
- Readers for exams
- Print scanners
- Early syllabus
- Taped lectures
- Lab assistants
- Copies of notes and overheads
- Extended time for in-class examinations

### **Before or Early in the Trimester**

- Allow the student and/or learning specialist access to reading lists or syllabi in advance. This allows the student to order the texts and materials in an alternate format.
- Reserve front seats for low vision students. If a guide dog is used, it will be highly disciplined and require little space.

### **During the Trimester**

- Face the class when speaking. Keep classroom doors completely closed or opened to help the blind students avoid collision.
- Convey in spoken words whatever you put on the chalkboard and whatever other visual cues or graphic materials you may use.
- Use white chalk on the chalkboard. Also clean chalkboards are easier for students to read.
- Permit lectures to be taped and/or provide copies of lecture notes, where appropriate.
- Provide copies of classroom materials to support staff to have them enlarged or Brailled, if necessary.
- Be flexible with assignment deadlines.
- Plan field trips and special projects well in advance and alert the staff to whatever adaptations may be needed.
- If a specific task is impossible for the student to carry out, consider an alternative assignment.

### **Examinations and Evaluations**

- Students should not be exempt from examinations or be expected to master less content or a lower level of scholastic skills because of a visual impairment. Alternative means of assessing their course achievements may be necessary. The students themselves, because of their experience in previous learning situations may offer suggestions on testing and evaluation strategies. The most expedient devices are alternative examinations (oral, large-print Braille, or taped), the extension of time for exams, and the use of such aids as print enlargers, specialized computer programs or tape recorders.
- Other adaptations suited to specific instructional situations, such as tactile materials in presenting diagrams or illustrations in certain subjects, may be helpful.

## Temporary Conditions

### Definition

Temporary conditions occur for a relatively short period of time, but can impact the student's ability to function in his or her usual manner. These conditions can include fractures, severe sprains, infections and other non-permanent conditions. Temporary conditions are not covered by the ADA and/or Rehabilitation Act; however, NCSA is committed to providing assistance to these students.

### Assistance

Assistance for these situations is dependent on an assessment of the impact the temporary condition has on the student's required academic activities. For information regarding temporary *conditions that require classroom adjustments*, the student should contact the Director of Counseling and Disability Services. The student must have a statement from his/her treating physician. The statement must:

- Be on letterhead and signed by the physician
- Contain a brief description of the condition with diagnosis and limitation of activities
- The length of time the student will need classroom adjustments

For information regarding temporary conditions **that require accessible transportation on campus and for special parking** for a period of twelve weeks or less, the student should contact Campus Police at 770-3321. The student must have a statement from his/her treating physician.

The statement must:

- Be on letterhead and signed by the physician
- Contain a brief description of the condition with diagnosis and limitation of activities
- The length of time the student will need special services and/or accessible alternate transportation and/or parking
- Address the maximum distance the student can walk
- Address the student's ability to negotiate stairs

**Please Note:** Special Parking *does not* allow students to park in spaces designated Handicap Parking. Students will be subjected to the same rules and fines as others if students are found parking in these spaces. If a student feels he/she requires handicap parking status, he/she should contact the State of North Carolina's Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The DMV are the only ones authorized to issue Handicap parking rights.

## **Students with Disabilities and Related Attendance Issues**

Class attendance policies are *not* determined by Counseling and Disability Services. Because attendance may be integral to the pedagogic process, these policies are set by faculty at the university, departmental, or individual level.

In some cases, attendance is fundamental to course objectives; for example, students may be required to interact with others in the class, to demonstrate the ability to think and argue critically, or to participate in group projects. In other instances, faculty may determine that mastery of course content may be achieved despite some or many absences.

Similarly, faculty also determine policies regarding make-up work and missed quizzes and exams. Faculty are not required to fundamentally alter standards for accommodation purposes.

Counseling and Disability Services, upon request and written permission from the student, does issue a written letter which verifies the presence of a disability which has the potential to affect attendance. Verification is based upon written medical and/or psychological documentation from the appropriate professional.

The letter of notification should be used by the student to initiate discussions with professors. This should be done at the start of the trimester or immediately after a diagnosis is verified. Classroom attendance policy, procedures for notifying faculty about absences, and make-up policies and procedures should all be discussed. Many students find that it is important to consider this information with respect to his/her disability. Thus, a determination may be made as to how the individual's academic or artistic progress may be affected by absences within a particular course or field of study.

Students are responsible for reporting absences directly to their faculty in accordance with the individual faculty member's policy except in the event of an illness which is so severe that it results in the student being unable to do so. In this event, the student may contact Counseling and Disability Services to request assistance in notifying faculty. Counseling and Disability Services may require verification of the immediate medical event.

Students are also advised to listen closely to faculty announcements about attendance and make-up policies and procedures and to check course syllabi for additional information about these issues.

## FAQ

### **Q: What is the Office of Counseling and Disability Services?**

**A:** The Counseling and Disability Services Office coordinates and ensures services and accommodations for registered students with disabilities as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. OCDS also acts as a gateway for disability-related information and guidance. These services provide equal educational opportunities to students by minimizing the impact of functional limitations upon their academic and non-academic lives.

---

### **Q: Who is responsible for determining reasonable accommodations?**

**A:** OCDS is the only office on campus that determines appropriate accommodations. Decisions regarding accommodations are based on documentation provided by the student with a disability, as well as the student's functional limitations.

---

### **Q: Are all students with disabilities registered with OCDS?**

**A:** No. It is possible that a student with a disability has chosen not to register with OCDS, or may not have met the eligibility criteria for services. In either instance, faculty do not need to provide accommodations for those students unless the disability is so blatant (e.g., requiring a wheelchair, interceptor, walking cane, etc.). It is still advisable that students having obvious disabilities register with OCDS.

---

### **Q: How do I know if a student is registered with OCDS?**

**A:** Students registered with OCDS will present you with a current Letter of Accommodations provided by OCDS that will state what accommodations the student is allowed.

---

### **Q: When is a student required to notify me of a need for accommodations?**

**A:** OCDS encourages but does not require registered students to meet with you at the beginning of each trimester to discuss his Letter of Accommodations. However, a student can register with OCDS or present their Letter of Accommodations to you at any time during the trimester.

---

### **Q: Do I need to be presented with a Letter of Accommodations each trimester for the same student if I have him in another class or another trimester? Can't I just assume that once I am notified of a student's need for accommodations the first time that he's registered for subsequent trimesters?**

**A:** The student is required to present to you a current Letter of Accommodations each trimester for each class. You cannot assume that once a student is registered the first time, he is registered the next time. Also, a student's accommodation needs may alter from trimester to trimester depending upon new or existing documentation. Each Letter must be reviewed carefully.

**Q:** Am I allowed to request documentation from the student for any reason?

**A:** No. Documentation stating and describing a student's disability is confidential information. Documentation for students registered with OCDS is kept at OCDS.

---

**Q:** Do I have any recourse if I disagree with the requested accommodations?

**A:** Yes. You should contact OCDS to discuss your concerns and ask for the Director of Counseling and Disability Services.

---

**Q:** I have a student in class who provided me with a letter regarding accommodations but has since never used them. What is my responsibility in this situation?

**A:** It is up to the student to determine and to communicate when and under what circumstances accommodations are needed.

---

**Q:** A student provides me with a Letter asking for accommodations but he never uses them. The student then comes to me at the end of the trimester right before Finals, and tells me he's failing and asks for the requested accommodations now. What do I do?

**A:** The student has ultimate responsibility to make use of the accommodations that have been identified as reasonable. You are not expected to retroactively make adjustments on any prior assignments or testing. You are able to provide accommodations from that point on.

---

**Q:** If a student informs me that he has a disability and would like an accommodation such as extra time for an exam but does not have a letter from OCDS stating his accommodations, am I required to provide accommodations?

**A:** No, you are not required to provide any requested accommodation unless you have been presented with a current Letter of Accommodations provided by the Office of Disability Services unless the disability is so obvious that accommodations are essential (e.g., wheelchair accessibility). Generally, a student must be registered with OCDS before accommodations will be provided.

---

**Q:** Am I required to lower the standards of a required assignment because the student has a disability?

**A:** No. The standards should be the same for all students. However, some students with disabilities may exhibit their knowledge, production or other course expectations differently than their peers. Accommodations are designed to address those differences, but the quality of the end result should be the same.

---

**Q:** I have a student who is having difficulty in my class. I think this student may have a disability. What should I do to help the student?

**A:** Talk privately with the student to discuss your observations. Do not assume that the student's difficulties are a result of a disability, but if, through discussion with the student, it appears appropriate to refer the student to one or more campus resources. Offer options to the student, such as the Learning Specialist, Counseling Center, as well as Disability Services. If the student discloses that he or she does have a disability, suggest that the student contact OCDS to explore options for accommodations.

---

**Q:** I have a student with a disability who is getting behind in his schoolwork. The student is missing a number of classes and has not handed in several assignments. Although he has taken a midterm and used accommodations, his grade is about a D. At this point he is not passing the class. Do I have a right to fail a student with a disability?

**A:** The student with a disability has the same right to fail as anyone else. Work produced by the student should be equivalent to his peers. Provision of accommodations is no guarantee of academic success.

---

**Q:** If students need in-class academic accommodations to be successful, what will they do when they get out in the "real world"?

**A:** OCDS strives to promote independence within each of our students, providing means through which students excel in the present and prepare themselves for the future. For some individuals accommodations will be essential in both the academic environment and the work force. Accommodations for sensory disabilities, such as hearing loss, low vision or blindness, may be the responsibility of an employer. For many students, however, the greatest need for accommodations are in academically-related pursuits, such as test-taking or note taking in class.