

## **Faculty Quick Guide**

### **What constitutes a disability?**

A disability is defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Learning is an example of a major life activity. If you have a mental or physical condition, a history of such a condition, or a condition which may be considered by others as substantially limiting, you may have a legally defined disability.

### **What should students know when applying to UTSA? Are there any special procedures?**

Students with disabilities must apply to UTSA through the regular admissions procedure. There are no special admissions procedures. A student may, however, apply to testing agencies for the provision of accommodations when taking standardized tests such as the SAT and GRE. Students must contact those individual testing agencies for further information.

### **What are the responsibilities of a student if they would like to receive academic accommodations based on a disability?**

At UTSA, a student with a disability is responsible for self-identifying and requesting accommodations through Student Disability Services (SDS). A student with a disability is also responsible for providing appropriate documentation that substantiates their disability. See specific documentation guidelines and registration procedures in Student Disability Services. [www.utsa.edu/disability](http://www.utsa.edu/disability)

### **Does an instructor have the responsibility to make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities?**

An instructor has the responsibility to make reasonable accommodations. Approved accommodations make it possible for a student with a disability to overcome barriers enabling the student to demonstrate their academic abilities in the same way that glasses do not strengthen vision but help a person to see. The instructor also has a legal responsibility to provide appropriate accommodations. For more information go to the Americans with Disabilities Act website <http://www.ada.gov>

### **How are appropriate accommodations for a student determined?**

To determine academic accommodations for a student, the student must first submit appropriate documentation to Student Disability Services. After the SDS Documentation Review Committee reviews the documentation and engages in an interactive dialogue with the student, a notification letter/email will be sent to the both the student and faculty member outlining the approved academic accommodations <http://www.utsa.edu/disability/accommodations/>

**What are the responsibilities of an instructor when working with students with disabilities?**

- ✓ Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, and knowledge of their courses and evaluate students on this basis. Students with disabilities should meet the same course expectations as their peers as long as approved accommodations have been appropriately put in place.
- ✓ Provide accommodations to those students that you have received an official accommodation notification email from SDS. It is NOT your responsibility to provide accommodations to students who have not followed the official university procedures.
- ✓ Use a syllabus statement and class announcements to invite students to disclose their needs.
- ✓ Act immediately upon getting a student's request for accommodations by engaging in an interactive dialogue with the student/s (***Note: The student is responsible for scheduling any accommodated tests in Student Disability Services IF they receive this service as part of their accommodations***).
- ✓ Contact SDS if you would like further guidance, are unsure of how to apply the accommodations, or would like SDS personnel to be involved in the interactive dialogue with you and the student.
- ✓ If a student needs alternative media, please provide SDS with syllabi, textbooks, course packets etc. well before classes begin (at least 4-8 weeks prior to the start of the semester is recommended) in order for students with disabilities to use alternative media when all other students have course materials. With such timely consideration, students with disabilities who have alternative media needs for accommodations and instructional access will be best served. Converting print materials is both labor and time intensive. Alternative media may be print material in Braille, scanned onto discs, or enlarged.
- ✓ Work to ensure that all audio-visual materials used in class are accessible (e.g., that videos shown are captioned for students with hearing impairments and that the VCR equipment used has captioning capabilities, that videos shown will be made with auditory description in some way or that written transcripts will be provided, etc.)
- ✓ Clearly communicate and document your interactions with the student and with SDS.