

Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty

Questions about Documentation

Q: If a student verbally informs me about his or her disability, am I automatically required to provide accommodations?

A: No. Accommodations should only be provided after receiving an official accommodation memo from the Office of Disability Academic Support. We discourage providing accommodations in the absence of an official accommodation memo. If a student does not have an accommodation letter, please refer the student to the Office of Disability Academic Support (DH 2016).

Q: Are students required to identify their disability or provide copies of disability documentation to faculty and staff?

A: No. A student should only provide disability documentation to the Office of Disability Academic Support and to no other office or faculty member due to confidentiality laws. Liberty University has given authority to ODAS to interpret disability documentation, determine the existence of a disability, and determine appropriate accommodations in this university setting.

Q: What should I do if a student tries to give me his/her documentation?

A: Refuse to read or accept the documentation and refer the student to the Office of Disability Academic Support (DH 2016). The student will present his or her documentation to the ODAS staff for review and subsequent discussions of appropriate accommodations and the process of using accommodations in classes.

Q: Is the student required to provide an accommodation memo sent from the Office of Disability Academic Support Office (ODAS) each semester even if I have been sent a memo concerning this student in a prior semester?

A: Yes. The Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) will send a new accommodation memo each semester based on current disability documentation and the student's current accommodation needs.

Q: Why doesn't the accommodation memo from the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) include the nature of the student's disability?

A: Confidentiality of a student's specific disability diagnosis and the details of the disability are very important. The student cannot be required to provide these details, although a student may feel comfortable discussing his or her disability as related to the classroom accommodations. The university grants authority to the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) to receive and interpret disability documentation, determine the existence of a disability, and determine appropriate accommodations.

Questions about Accommodations

Q: Who determines the accommodations for a student with a disability?

A: The University has granted the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) the authority to interpret disability documentation and determine appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

Q: When a student identifies himself or herself as having a disability, what should faculty and staff do?

A: The faculty member should refer the student directly to the Office of Disability Academic Support (DH 2016) by recommending the student call 434-582-2159 to make an appointment to discuss the academic accommodation process. Due to confidentiality laws, the faculty member should not accept or read the student's documentation, even if offered.

Q: When is a student required to notify faculty of a need for accommodations?

A: A student can notify a faculty member of the need for accommodations by having the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) send a memo at any time during the semester. Accommodations should then be provided from that point forward in the semester. Accommodations are not expected to be applied retroactively. Reasonable notice should be provided to the professor by the student for accommodations such as test accommodations.

Q: What is my responsibility if a student provides me with a current accommodation memo sent from the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) but chooses not to use any accommodations in my class? What if the student doesn't ask to use an accommodation until after failing several assignments or exams?

A: Your responsibility is to provide the accommodations beginning when they are requested by the student. It is the student's choice as to which accommodations to use in each of his or her classes. The student has been advised by the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) that accommodations do not have to be provided retroactively. So, if a student chooses to take a test without extended time and does poorly on the test, the professor does not have to allow the student to retake that test using extended time. The student should notify the professor in advance that he or she will be using extended time on the next test.

Q: What is my responsibility with respect to providing testing accommodations, such as extended time for tests?

A: For all disability testing accommodation requests (i.e. quieter environment, extended time, oral testing) the Tutoring/Testing Center (TE 128) is the officially designated place for all tests administered outside of the regular classroom. A professor has the right to administer the test at another location, but has an obligation to ensure that the testing accommodations are upheld.

Questions about Classroom, Assignment, and Grading

Q: Should I extend deadlines or grade students with disabilities differently?

A: No. The same assignment deadlines, grading criteria, or any deadline extensions should be applied to all students within your class. Academic accommodations, such as determined by the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) are put in place to remove the barriers to learning and demonstrating knowledge between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

However, on a case-by-case basis, a situation may arise where ODAS grants a student the accommodation of extended deadlines on assignments. If that accommodation is listed on the official ODAS accommodation memo and you have any questions or concerns, please contact ODAS at 434-582-2159 to discuss these concerns.

Q: If a student discloses a disability after failing an exam or assignment, what should I do?

A: Academic accommodations cannot be applied retroactively. The faculty member should refer the student directly to the Office of Disability Academic

Support (ODAS) recommending the student call 434-582-2159 to make an appointment to discuss the academic accommodation process.

Are the rules for student conduct different when the student with a disability is misbehaving, threatening or rude?

A: No. The student with a disability should be held to the same conduct standards as any other student within your class. If you feel the disruption is a direct result of the specific disability or have questions, please contact the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) at 434-582-2159 to discuss your concerns.

If I suspect one of my students has a disability that interferes with his or her academic performance, what should I do?

A: When approaching the student to discuss his or her academic struggles, it is appropriate for the faculty member to reference these difficulties and suggest that the student consult with the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS). The student should contact ODAS at 434-582-2159 to set an appointment. Disability advisors in ODAS can talk with the student confidentially about these academic concerns and make recommendations on possible support resources or further courses of action.

Questions about General Information about ODAS

Q: What is the Office of Disability Academic Support?

A: The Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS), under the umbrella of the Center for Academic Support and Advising Services (CASAS) was created to coordinate academic support services for Liberty University students who have documented disabilities. ODAS works to ensure that students with disabilities

receive equal access to curricular opportunities in the academic community, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. ODAS is located in the Demoss Hall, room 2016. The Hands of Liberty Deaf Department is also in the same location within the Center for Academic Support and Advising Services (CASAS).

Q: Why are we required to accommodate students with disabilities?

A: In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Liberty University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities have the opportunity to pursue a postsecondary education without barriers to instruction. The university has given the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) authority to interpret disability documentation, to determine the existence of a disability, and determine appropriate accommodations in this university setting. Academic accommodations, as determined by ODAS, serve to “level the playing field” (by removing barriers) between students with disabilities and students who do not have a documented disability.

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

A: If a faculty member disagrees with a specific accommodation or believes the specific accommodation will fundamentally alter the essential components of the course, the faculty member should contact the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) at 434-582-2159 to discuss the specific nature of the accommodation’s impact on the course.

Q: How do I know if a student is registered with the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS)?

A: A faculty member will only know if a student is registered with the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) if the student has ODAS send accommodation

memos each semester. Not all students registered with ODAS will use academic accommodations.

Q: Does granting accommodations to one student provide an unfair advantage over the other students in the class?

A: Academic accommodations are based on appropriate disability documentation which serves to “level the playing field” (by removing barriers to learning and demonstration of knowledge) between students with disabilities and students without disabilities in the academic setting.