

## Accommodations 101: Accessibility and Disability Services

### A Guide for Faculty at EMCC

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Many students have accommodations for various disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act protect students with documented disabilities from discrimination. EMCC ensures equal access by providing reasonable accommodations. These reasonable accommodations are determined by the Coordinator of Disability Services on an individual, case-by-case basis. It's important to remember that approved accommodations are not for the purpose of giving a student a "leg up," but rather, equal access. This document may serve as a guide to faculty at EMCC for working with students with disabilities.



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## “The Letters”

Students bear the responsibility to obtain a “Notification of Approved Accommodations Letter” from the Coordinator of Disability Services to provide to each of their instructors before any accommodated activity occurs. These letters stipulate what accommodations are approved for the individual student. Once a student hands the letter to the instructor, the instructor is responsible for understanding the information on the letter. The student must make any testing arrangements with the Student Success Center.

## Testing Accommodations Procedure

Accommodations may include testing accommodations where the student has the option to take quizzes, tests, or exams in the Student Success Center in a reduced distraction room.

1. Student provides letter at the start of the semester to instructor so the instructor knows testing accommodations are warranted.
2. **Student SCHEDULES** an upcoming test, quiz, or exam 48 hours in advance by contacting staff in the Student Success Center and obtaining a **Test Proctoring Form**. The SSC staff then reserves a private room. This can be done in person and on paper, or over the phone and through email.
3. **Student delivers** the Test Proctoring Form to the instructor.
4. **Instructor delivers** the exam to Liz Atkinson or Marcie Grant (in the Student Success Center) with the Test Proctoring Form. This form includes test instructions for the test proctors. The form and the test may be hand delivered or through email: [success@emcc.edu](mailto:success@emcc.edu) .
5. The student shows up at the agreed upon time, takes the test proctored by SSC staff, and the test is then kept safely in Marcie Grant’s office in a cabinet after completion.
6. **Instructor picks up the test** or requests that it is scanned and emailed to them.



## FAFQs : Frequently Asked Faculty Questions

- Q: A student has requested accommodations but has not provided me with a letter from Disability Services. Do I accommodate them?

*A: It is not advised that you provide accommodations to a particular student until you are presented with a “Notification of Approved Accommodations Letter.” However, if you utilize Universal Design for Learning, and your classroom design provides built-in accessibility, it’s possible that you may not need to make adjustment for individual students. More info on UDL on Page 5.*

- Q: Can the Student Success Center proctor all my tests for any of my students?

*A: The SSC offers make-up testing at a defined time announced at the start of each semester – typically at Noon on a Tuesday or Wednesday. These make-up exam times are the only time the SSC proctors non-accommodated students but will be consistent throughout the semester.*

- Q: What if I don’t understand an accommodation or I don’t feel that it applies to my class?

*A: If you are unsure how to accommodate a student, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, Liz Saucier – [esaucier@emcc.edu](mailto:esaucier@emcc.edu) or 974-4868.*

- Q: Why do I keep getting “your letters” if I utilize UDL strategies such as take-home exams and non-traditional forms of assessment? What if an accommodation does not apply to my class because of my classes’ inclusive and accessible design?

*A: The Coordinator is not able to differentiate teaching strategies of each and every instructor at EMCC or review syllabi of each and every class at the start of the semester. If you “have it covered,” great! If you’re not sure, feel free to speak to the student and the Coordinator about variances in accommodations.*

- Q: Why do I need to provide accommodations?

*A: It is the law. The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act make it very clear that approved accommodations may not be ignored.*

- Q: A student disclosed their disability to me. Can I speak with them freely about it since they disclosed it? Can I request doctor’s notes for absences?

*A: A student owns their own personal information and may choose when and when not to disclose to faculty. Faculty should never ask what a student’s disability is, and should use discretion when they are provided that information by the student.*

- Q: What is an accommodation? What if I believe it impacts technical standards of my class?

*A: Accommodations do not lower academic standards or compromise the integrity of an academic program. Please contact Liz Saucier if you would like to discuss a particular accommodation if you feel it impacts an essential standard or technical standard of the class.*

## Types of Accommodations

- Sign language interpreters
  - Note takers or scribes
  - Providing written notes or outline to student prior to class
  - Audio-recording a class lecture
  - Test taking accommodations, such as:
    - giving exams in alternative formats (e.g., giving a written exam orally, or changing the way answers are recorded);
    - extending the time allowed;
    - permitting use of a dictionary or spell checker (unless test is designed to measure spelling ability);
    - providing quiet room for test taking in order to decrease auditory or visual distractions
- 
- Use of calculator
  - Raised/adjustable desks and tables
  - Assistive listening devices
  - Removal of architectural barriers
  - Written materials in alternative formats such as large print, electronic rather than paper, paper rather than electronic, audio-format, etc.

## Disability Defined

Disability is defined as any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, **learning**, or working. “Substantially limited” generally means that a person is unable to perform a major life activity that the average person in the general population can perform. The ADA also prohibits discrimination against individuals who have a record or history of being substantially impaired and individuals who are regarded as having such impairments. For more information, visit [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)

Types of disabilities include but are not limited to: Genetic Disorders, Learning Disorders, Impairments related to injury (traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury), diabetes, visual or hearing impairments, nerve damage, limb loss, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, etc.

## Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

The following information is adapted from CAST.org. Visit [www.udloncampus.cast.org](http://www.udloncampus.cast.org) for more information.

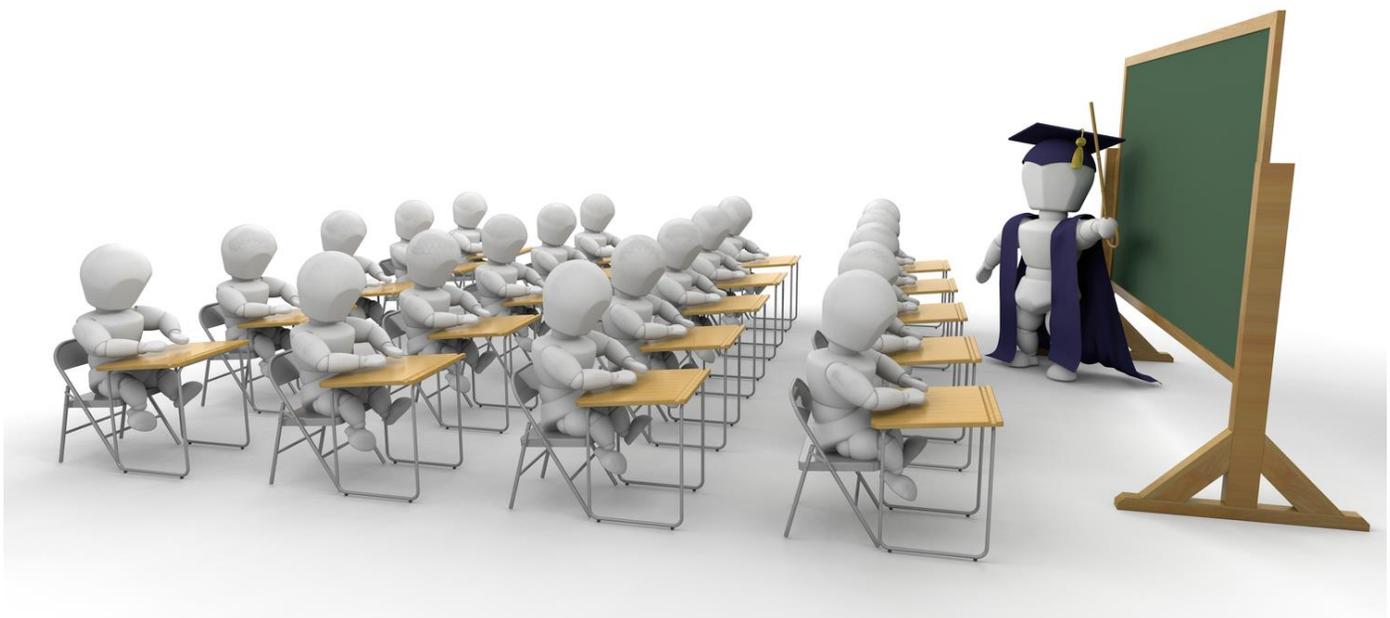
Universal Design for Learning is a **framework** – a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals **equal opportunities** to learn.

“UDL provides a **blueprint** for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone – not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs” (CAST.org)

### Where do I start?

Start here: Syllabus Design: [http://udloncampus.cast.org/page/planning\\_syllabus#.V6x-DU1gmJA](http://udloncampus.cast.org/page/planning_syllabus#.V6x-DU1gmJA)

Many instructors at EMCC utilize UDL principles each and every day with their students. Kudos to you! Implementing UDL principles starts with making a change. It takes planning and creativity. Keep up the good work, EMCC faculty!



A handout from [DeafTEC.org](http://DeafTEC.org) for faculty working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students:



## Top Ten Things

### Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students Would Like Teachers to Do

**1. Don't use words like "this" and "that" as referents in the class or lab.**

For example, in the lab don't use sentences like "move these things over there." Instead use proper names – including technical terminology – when referencing items, for example: "Move the small beaker to the table by the window." Allow time for students (and an interpreter or captionist if present) to reference the item or location so that the proper association is made. When you are more specific it helps all students, hearing or deaf, to understand.

**2. Have PowerPoint and lecture notes available to the students before class.**

Providing these materials ahead of the class makes it easier for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to prepare for class and, as importantly, provides a context for class discussions. Make sure that support service providers (interpreter, notetaker, tutor, and/or captionist) are provided with access to the material too – either through a hard copy provided in advance of the class, if possible, or through some other source such as email or posted on the web.

**3. Treat all students equally.**

When students register for your class they are all there to learn, although each has different skills and understanding. Keep in mind that although deaf and hard-of-hearing students have special needs they are basically the same as hearing students. You set the tone – perhaps without realizing it – for the entire class; make sure it is one in which all students are treated equally.

**4. Have a positive/flexible attitude.**

A positive and flexible attitude helps everyone. You are a model for your students. We encourage you to be open in your interactions with deaf and hard-of-hearing students in your classes.

**5. Interpreters are not always an accurate reflection of students when voicing for them.**

Be patient when an interpreter voices for students. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students use diverse communications skills. If you do not understand the student's question or statement, ask for it to be repeated, and consider that the interpreter may not be voicing accurately and/or may need time to clarify unclear information with the student.

**6. Be aware of "process time," the time required to process information into another language.**

Slow down! We know it's tough, but the rapid pace of instruction is one of the top areas of classroom concern by deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing students. Recognize that there is a processing time of 5-10 seconds between what you say and the time that an interpreter signs the material to students. This has significant implications, particularly in an interactive classroom. If you ask for class participation (to answer questions, state opinions, give



(Top Ten Things, continued from page 6)

examples, etc.) allow the necessary time for your statement to be interpreted before calling on a student. This will provide an equal opportunity for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to participate.

**7. When presenting visual material, (for example, showing PowerPoint slides, using a document camera, etc.) give students time to read before moving on.**

This allows students to absorb information before you begin to explain the content – and will minimize later confusion. Allow ample time for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to read presented media before you begin to speak.

Consider using a document camera or visualizer to display documents via a projector or on a TV screen. This will allow deaf and hard-of-hearing students to study the projected documents while simultaneously receiving information from their interpreters, and provides all students with the opportunity to make meaningful and direct connections between the documents and the information discussed.

**8. Allow deaf students to have access to the first few rows in class on the first day.**

The principal concern is that all students can see you clearly. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students frequently need to sit at or near the front of the room in order to have a clear view of you, of the interpreter, of the captioning, and of any classroom materials. However this orientation also means that when hearing students are contributing to the class, the deaf and hard-of-hearing students will not know who is speaking. We encourage you to identify the speaker, have the speaker pause to allow him/her to be identified, and then speak. If smooth communication is not possible, repeat the student statement yourself.

**9. Don't force groups of deaf/hearing students to work together – before you establish groups, ask students privately for their preferences in group assignments.**

Ask the deaf and hard-of-hearing students before class for their preferences regarding group organization, and of their need for an interpreter, captionist, or notetaker. This can be crucial to finding a satisfactory solution for your particular environment and available resources. If you force students to work together, uncomfortable situations may arise.

**10. If you are using a laser pointer, allow the pointer to remain on the object for an extended period of time.**

By allowing the pointer to remain positioned, deaf and hard-of-hearing students will be able to locate its position, read the content there, and return their attention to you (and an interpreter or captionist if present).

*Handout provided by DeafTEC and Class Act at <http://www.deaftec.org>. DeafTEC and Class Act have been funded in part by the National Science Foundation, the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), and Demonstration Projects to Ensure Students with Disabilities Receive Quality Higher Education, US Department of Education. The Center is housed at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, one of the nine colleges of the Rochester Institute of Technology (NTID/RIT) in Rochester, New York. DeafTEC, award numbers DUE 1104229 and 1501756, is supported by the National Science Foundation. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.*



## Syllabus Statement

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**The following statement below must be included on all syllabi at EMCC so that students know how to access Disability Services. If you have an electronic copy of your syllabus that you provide to students, feel free to link this statement to the EMCC web page for Disability Services!**

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** EMCC provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need accommodations due to a disability, please contact Elizabeth Atkinson, Coordinator of Disability Services, as soon as possible at [eatkinson@emcc.edu](mailto:eatkinson@emcc.edu) or by phone at 974-4868. Elizabeth is located in Maine Hall, room 121A in the Student Success Center.



Dear Faculty at EMCC,

Thank you for your dedication in providing an accessible classroom experience to your students! I hope you found the Accommodations 101 packet helpful. I am open to feedback! Please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be found in the Student Success Center, rm 121 A.

Liz Atkinson, Coordinator of Disability Services

[Eatkinson@emcc.edu](mailto:Eatkinson@emcc.edu)

207-974-4868

