Ability Services Alternative Instruction Response Plan for Accommodated Students

Background on Student Population

Students who are registered with the Ability Services Office are diagnosed with one or more conditions that substantially impact them academically, socially, and in their day-to-day lives. Thus, this unexpected and unprecedented event regarding the virus COVID-19 has been and will continue to be an exceptionally difficult time for our particular student population. A considerable portion of our registered students are diagnosed with anxiety disorders, chronic health issues, and many of our students struggle considerably with unexpected changes that disrupt their structures, routines, and processes. Thus, it is vital that we all work together to find creative and reasonable solutions to meet the accommodation needs of our students.

Listed below is the communication that went out to registered students on March 12, 2020. It outlines the recommendations that our office has for students to work with their faculty to continue honoring their reasonable accommodations in an online or alternative format.

Communication to Accommodated Students

- TheAbility Services Manager will be working with the Director of Academic Excellence and Student Success, Provost, Department Deans, and Department Chairs to notify them, their staff, and colleagues that they are required to include additional test time for accommodated students on all tests and quizzes for students with this approved testing accommodation who also have given their professors their Faculty Notification Letters this semester.

- As an extra layer of support, I would ask that for all students with approved testing accommodations who requested accommodations this semester (meaning you gave your Faculty Notification Letter to your professors) that you send your professors a reminder email about your 1.5x or 2.0x testing accommodation. You can use the following template as a guide:

  “I gave you my Faculty Notification Letter that explains my need for additional time in your course. I am asking that you extend all of my timed quizzes and exams to include my 1.5x (or 50% more time) testing accommodation. If you need confirmation of this accommodation, please contact Alicia Reinke-Tuthill or Deb Morgan.”

  Deb Morgan, Accommodations Manager, debra.morgan@uwrf.edu
  Alicia Reinke-Tuthill, Ability Services Manager, alicia.reinketuthill@uwrf.edu

- For students with notetaking accommodations, we are asking that once you know more about how the class is structured in the online format, that you let us know if you will require notes during this time. We know that some students may require a continuation of their notetaking accommodation during online instruction, and there may be some students who may not require their notetaking accommodation if the course is offered in an online format. Notetakers will be informed no later than March 12, 2020, of this plan. If you have immediate concerns regarding notetaking in your online courses and you would like to continue to receive notes in the online portion of your course regardless of online format, contact Alicia as soon as possible.
**Faculty Notification Letter and Confirmation of Accommodations**

During this transition, it may be difficult to remember who requested accommodations in your course and if they have used any of their approved accommodations.

Listed below is a snip of what a general *Faculty Notification Letter* looks like and the types of accommodations that may be included in their approved accommodation letter. A student cannot ask for any accommodations without giving their instructor this form first. There are also sample scenarios to help faculty identify potential scenarios you may encounter during this transition when working with accommodated students.

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Confidential. Please do not share.

Spring 2020 Course: __________

Professor: __________

Accept this letter as verification that __________ is registered with the Ability Services Office. The student has provided documentation which appropriately supports a disability under ADA and has been approved for the following academic accommodation(s).

1. Alternative Testing
   - Extra Time 1.5x
   - Distraction Reduced Testing Location

2. Notetaking Services
   - If requested by the student, the student must present a completed Note Taker Application to the professor. It's important the student's folder number is included (last 4 digits of UWRF ID number). The professor is asked to recruit a note taker. Please contact Ability Services if questions about this process.

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**Scenario 1:** Student A hands the instructor their letter and has been testing in Ability Services to meet the needs of their 1.5x additional time accommodation on tests. The student asks you to extend all of their online tests and exams to include their additional time.

**Response:** This student has followed the outlined accommodation process and protocol. Thus, all tests and quizzes that are online should be extended to meet their accommodation needs.

***We are not requiring the accommodated student to communicate with you for every online test or quiz about the need for the request. We are asking that students send you an email reminder that they have this accommodation and would like to use it during alternative instruction.

**Scenario 2:** Student B has not given you their *Faculty Notification Letter*, but states they are connected with Ability Services, and they want to have their online test and quiz times extended.

**Response:** This student has not followed the outlined accommodation process and protocol. Even if approved for accommodations, students are required to share their *Faculty Notification Letter* with their instructor to use any accommodations in the course. The distributed letter is the student's outward request that they would like to use their accommodations in your course. Students are allowed to choose IF they would like to use their accommodations on a course-by-
Instruct
ors should contact the Ability Services Office to confirm the need for this accommodation before approving.

Confirmation of Accommodations

If there is uncertainty regarding whether a student has been approved for accommodation, or if they have gone through the accommodation process accordingly, faculty are asked to forward the name of the student to the Ability Services Office.

If a confirmation of accommodations is required, contact the Ability Services Office. The Ability Services Manager will confirm or deny the status of the student’s accommodations. The student will be included in all relevant communication.

Recommendations for Faculty

Flexible Attendance Consideration

- If a student has supplied you a “Faculty Notification Letter” and “Flexible Attendance Consideration” is listed as a reasonable accommodation, recognize this accommodation will only be applicable from 1-27-20 – 3-13-20.
- This accommodation will not apply to students for the remaining spring term.
- This accommodation means the student is allowed a little flexibility beyond the attendance policy, as identified in each individual course.

Testing Accommodations

- As identified above, if a student has presented you with a Faculty Notification Letter that includes 1.5x or 2.0x for tests and quizzes, we are asking that all faculty extend the student’s quizzes or tests to include the students accommodated time.
- If the student has not given you a Faculty Notification Letter or additional time is not listed as an approved accommodation, do not accommodate their request. If faculty need any clarification on an approved accommodation, please reach out to the Ability Services Office for confirmation.
- All students with testing accommodations have been asked to send their faculty a reminder email to extend all of their online tests and quizzes to meet their accommodation needs.
- Students will not need faculty to sign a purple test form to approve the request for extended time in the online format.

Notetaking

- See information listed above.

Accessible Content

- Accommodated students with the approved accommodations of audiobooks or test questions read aloud will be receiving communication on useful tools and resources on accessing built-in accessibility on the personal technology devices. Accessibility features will be shared for Windows and Mac products.
Other Considerations:

- Many registered students struggle with online instruction; thus, when possible, they elect not to take online courses.
- For these students, struggles in online courses are a direct result of the impairments that come with the student’s disability.
- This abrupt change will present challenges and concerns with many of our students.
- For some diagnoses like autism and ADHD where executive functioning is impaired, students oftentimes struggle with self-directed content that requires better developed time-management, organization, prioritization, problem-solving, recognition of step-by-step processes, task-monitoring, attention, and long-term planning.
- This transition to online unexpectedly for these students will be more challenging than the general student body.
- This information is only to inform faculty of the concerns our students have reported and will continue to report.
- With limited options and a short timeline of developing instruction, it is advised that we all do what is reasonable and feasible under these circumstances with only the recognition in mind that these identified students will likely report concerns or ask for additional support from faculty and the Ability Services Office in their courses.

If faculty need any advice or guidance on how to meet the accommodation needs of students via online instruction, please reach out to Alicia Reinke-Tuthill, Manager of Ability Services at the following contact information:

Alicia Reinke-Tuthill
Manager of Ability Services
Ability Services

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Fostering Independence | Reducing Barriers | Promoting Inclusively
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers