

# 2011

## Disability Services: A Guide for Faculty



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# **DISABILITY SERVICES & STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: A GUIDE FOR FACULTY**

## **Our Mission**

Mount Saint Vincent University is committed to creating a rich and rewarding experience for all members of our community. Proud of the rich diversity of our community, the Mount provides services which both celebrate and support this. The University supports academically qualified students with appropriately documented disabilities in their efforts to participate as fully as reasonably possible in the University's programs. The academic accommodations provided shall be consistent with the principles of both the Canadian and Nova Scotia *Human Rights Acts* and the Mount's *Fair Treatment Policy* as they apply to the provision of academic accommodations and services to students with disabilities.

## **Types of Disabilities**

### **Learning Disabilities**

Learning disabilities (LD) are invisible and lifelong neurological disorders that affect how a person acquires, understands, retains, organizes, or communicates information. People with LD's are intelligent and capable of learning. LD's are not the same as mental retardation, autism, behavioral disorders or laziness. Common types of learning disabilities include:

- Reading Disorder is sometimes referred to as dyslexia; affects language and is related to the ability of the brain to process the sounds in words.
- Disorder of Written Expression is sometimes referred to as dysgraphia; may affect spelling, handwriting, or the ability to put thoughts on paper.
- Mathematics Disorder is sometimes referred to as dyscalculia; may affect basic computational math (adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, etc.) and/or understanding of abstract math concepts.

Additionally, students may have difficulty with tasks that require memorization, organization, and focused attention.

### Accommodations (examples of)

- A note-taker &/or audio taping of lecture
- Reader &/or scribe for exams
- Extra time for exams
- Alternate exam format
- Laptop to write exams

- Extra time for assignments
- Laptop for lecture note-taking
- No penalty for spelling on in-class tests or work
- Power points provided (preferably before class)

### Teaching Tips

- Provide overviews and reviews of lessons
- Provide multiple delivery and assessment methods for lessons
- Provide text information and power points well before class (this allows those who require extra time to be prepared)
- Break assignments into smaller parts with individual deadlines
- Offer assistance/extra help (or suggest other support resources)

### **Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

ADHD is a condition that, depending on the type, interferes with attention span, impulse control, and/or hyperactivity to a degree that is more frequent and severe than is typical. There are three types of ADHD:

- ADHD Predominately Inattentive Type
- ADHD Predominately Hyperactive-Impulsive Type
- ADHD Combined Type

### Accommodations (examples of)

- A note-taker &/or audio taping of lecture
- Reader &/or scribe for tests
- Extra time for tests
- Student should be seated near the front of the class
- Laptop to write exams
- Extra time for assignments
- Laptop for lecture note-taking
- Power points provided (preferably before class)

### Teaching Tips

- Explicitly communicate expectations, assignments, and homework
- Break assignments into smaller parts with individual deadlines
- Offer assistance/extra help (or suggest other supportive resources)
- Vary the method of teaching to keep students interested

## Psychological Disorders

There are a variety of psychological disorders which include:

- Depression is an illness involving body, mood, and thoughts which may affect eating, sleeping, ability to generate or maintain interest and energy, difficulty thinking, as well as concentration and memory.
- Anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterized by cognitive, somatic, emotional, and behavioral components of a frequency, intensity, or duration above that which is typical. Anxiety can affect a person's ability to attend (physically or mentally) and function.
- Bipolar disorder (also known as manic depression) is an illness that causes psychological problems such as extremes of mood known as depression and mania, to such a degree that daily functioning is hampered by the symptoms.
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) usually develops as a result of an actual, witnessed, or threatened death or serious injury. Individuals with PTSD re-experience the traumatic event or events in some way, making them extremely sensitive to normal life experiences (hyper-arousal).

### *Accommodations (examples of)*

- A note-taker &/or audio taping of lecture
- Extra time for tests
- Extra time for assignments

### *Teaching Tips*

- Explicitly communicate expectations, assignments, and homework
- Break assignments into smaller parts with individual deadlines
- Offer assistance/extra help (or suggest other supportive resources)

## Hearing Impairment

A hearing impairment entails total or partial hearing loss that affects an individual's ability to participate with ease in everyday activities. It may also affect language acquisition, resulting in a speech impediment.

### *Accommodations (may vary depending on the degree of hearing loss)*

- Note-taker/tape recording and/or ASL interpreter
- FM device
- Seating at the front of the classroom

### Teaching Tips

- Avoid ‘teaching to the board’ – face students when lecturing as much as possible
- Do not over-enunciate words (for students who rely on lip-reading, it is much easier for them if the instructor speaks naturally)
- For students with partial hearing loss, speak clearly and audibly
- Make use of visual aids in the classroom (i.e. power point presentations, diagrams, etc)

### **Visual Impairment**

A visual impairment is a total or partial visual loss that affects an individual’s ability to participate with ease in everyday activities.

### Accommodations (may vary depending on the degree of vision loss)

- Note-taker &/or tape-recording lectures
- Assistive technology – Braille reading/writing software
- Textbooks/exams in large print or Braille
- Exam-taking accommodations
- Classroom should be free of clutter and barriers to mobility

### Teaching Tips

- Visual presentations should be accompanied by verbal explanations or descriptions
- If necessary, accommodations for tests and assignments should be made (i.e. oral testing)
- Make use of three-dimensional models to illustrate concepts rather than two-dimensional materials

### **Medical Disorders**

There are a variety of medical disorders which include:

- Head injury - caused by a trauma to the brain which affects physical, cognitive, and/or personality changes in an individual for a short period of time or permanently.
- Fibromyalgia - a condition characterized by chronic fatigue and muscle pain.
- Arthritis is a group of disorders that affect the joints/muscles and cause joint pain, stiffness, and/or inflammation. There are over 100 types of arthritis.
- Cerebral Palsy is a condition which affects body movement and muscle coordination.
- Cystic Fibrosis is a genetic disease in which mucus glands secrete thick, sticky mucus which blocks passageways in the body affecting normal bodily functions (i.e. breathing and digestion).

- Multiple Chemical Sensitivity is an unusually severe sensitivity or allergy-like reaction to many different kinds of chemicals including perfumes, petrol, diesel, and smoke, resulting in illness, headache and/or concentration difficulties.

Accommodations (depends on the type of condition)

- Note taker and/or tape-recording lectures
- Exam accommodations
- Student may need to take frequent breaks or get up and walk around to eliminate stiffness
- More comfortable seating or a footstool
- Assistive technology – computer, communication board, etc.
- Accessibility for students in wheelchairs (or with other mobility aids)
- Modification to class attendance requirements
- Other accommodations may be necessary if student misses a lot of time because of their illness (extra time to complete assignments, etc)

Teaching Tips (depends on the type of condition)

- As student may miss class time, be sure to communicate with the individual directly in regard to assignments and other important information
- Flexibility about how and when classroom tasks or assignments are completed
- As stress can be a factor in the severity of the condition, allow the student to work at their own pace on assignments
- Alternative formats for assignments and tests may be helpful
- An overview of the lesson provided beforehand may help students stay on task

## **Disability Services**

Disability Services (DS) provides services, resources and support to assist students with disabilities in accessing the appropriate academic accommodations consistent with their needs, and the faculty who teach them.

Disability Services registers students with disabilities who require academic accommodations, liaises with faculty and staff on behalf of the student, and schedules and arranges accommodations for midterm exams by providing the space, proctors and technology required.

Disability Services is located in Evaristus 218, and is staffed by the Coordinator of Disability Services (CDS), the Disability Resource Facilitator (DRF), the Disability Counsellor, and the Administrative Assistant (X6567).

## **Documentation**

A student with a disability must register with Disability Services prior to receiving accommodations. The University requires written documentation that is relevant with respect to the disability. This documentation must be current and from a competent and qualified professional in the area of the disability. Such a professional may include: registered psychologist, psychiatrist, medical doctor, or other medical specialist. For a learning disability, documentation must include a psycho-educational assessment and report from a registered psychologist. Documentation should contain a diagnosis, impact of disability on the student's learning and behaviour, and the types of accommodations recommended.

## **Accommodations & Additional Services**

Accommodations are determined on an individual basis taking into consideration the needs of the student and the academic integrity of the course or program.

The following list contains some of the accommodations provided to students and is included here for illustrative purposes only. However, other requests may be considered on an individual basis:

### **Classroom Accommodations**

- Note takers (faculty may be asked to request a volunteer from the class without identifying the student with a disability)
- Tape recorders (upon request by faculty, Disability Services will provide the Audio Agreement; see Appendix A)
- Laptops for lecture notes
- Accessible seating and mobility assistance
- Alternate formatting of classroom materials (e.g. electronic files, large print, Braille)
- Sign language interpreter

### **Test/Exam Accommodations**

- Extended time
- Separate, reduced distraction location
- Modified test format
- Oral, scribed or dictated tests
- Use of computer (provided by Disability Services), spell check, calculator, dictionary

### **Assistive Technology**

- Kurzweil 3000
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- TextHELP Read and Write

- Inspiration
- Jaws
- Digital Voice Recorder
- CCTV

### **Additional Services**

- Academic advising regarding course selection is available through the Office of the Academic Deans in consultation with the CDS
- Study skills training
- Counselling is offered to students with disabilities through Counselling and Psychological Services
- Accessible parking
- Information on scholarships, bursaries and awards
- Food allergies or dietary requirements accommodation
- Physical accessibility to most buildings, classes, residences, labs, elevators
- Limited transportation on and off campus

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **Faculty**

- Collaborates with the Coordinator of Disability Services (CDS) and the student to identify and establish the needs of the student and means to support them
- Works with the CDS to meet the student's needs through accommodations
- Contacts the CDS immediately if problems or questions arise regarding accommodations
- Maintains academic integrity of their course or program of study
- Refers students to Disability Services for information and support
- Includes a statement on their course syllabus regarding accommodating students with disabilities such as "Students who have a disability and who require academic accommodations must register with Disability Services in Evaristus 218 or by calling 457-6567."
- Provides a safe environment where students feel comfortable speaking privately about their challenges, needs and accommodations
- Keeps information released to them regarding a student with a disability confidential and uses discretion to best protect the student
- Follows universal design standards when teaching and evaluating students
- Acquires and maintains adequate knowledge of disabilities and seeks supports (ex. from Disability Services or Teaching and Learning Centre) when needed

### **Students**

- Registers with DS to make arrangements for accommodations as soon as possible (preferably prior to the beginning of term)

- Provides DS with appropriate documentation and discusses accommodations required
- Follows up with their faculty as early as possible regarding their accommodations
- Contacts the CDS immediately if there are any concerns with faculty and/or staff
- Contacts the CDS regarding any additional or revised accommodations which the student believes necessary, as soon as they become aware of the need
- When accommodations for midterm exams are needed, submits a *Request for Midterm Exam Accommodations* form to Disability Services
- When accommodations during the final exam period are needed, submits a *Request for Final Exam Accommodations* form to Disability Services by November 1st for December final exams and March 1st for April final exams
- Registers with DS every term, if accommodations are required

## **Disability Services**

### Coordinator of Disability Services (CDS)

- Registers students with Disability Services
  - reviews the documentation with the student
  - may consult with the qualified professional in the area of the disability for clarification or further information
  - in collaboration with the student, devises an accommodation plan (based on the documentation and information from the student and considering other relevant factors including academic standards)
  - provides student with a copy of the *Procedure and Accommodations Agreement* form which includes the accommodation plan
- Emails the *Letter to Faculty-Academic Accommodations* containing the proposed accommodations for the student to the faculty
- Meets with students and/or faculty having concerns regarding the disability and/or accommodations

### Disability Resource Facilitator

- Assists students with the Canada Student Grant (CSG) application form
- Trains students on assistive technology including Kurzweil 3000, Dragon Naturally Speaking, and TextHELP Read & Write
- Schedules and arranges accommodations for midterm exams
- Liaises with the Registrar's Office who is responsible for scheduling and arranging accommodations for final exams
- During Summer Sessions I and II schedules and arranges accommodations for both midterm and final exams

### Disability Counsellor

- Meets with students to identify strengths and weaknesses based on both formal (psycho-educational assessments) and informal assessment
- Provides study skill strategies tailored to individual needs
- Provides counselling related to disabilities (self-advocacy, self-esteem, adherence to medical or behavioural regime, etc.)
- Works with students and faculty to determine appropriate teaching and learning strategies to improve academic skills

### Proctors, Readers and Scribes

The following practices have been established for proctors, readers and scribes for the purposes of accommodating students with disabilities within the boundaries of academic integrity.

- Proctors, scribes and readers are selected and contracted by the University; one individual can fill all these roles
- They must be impartial and cannot have any other relationship with the student(s), other than that of a member of the Student Services Department, proctor, scribe or reader
- Proctors monitor students while they write their midterms/exams
- Readers read the test questions verbatim without any interpretation or clarification; if the student requests, they may re-read the question(s)
- Clarification of questions should only be done by the faculty member or someone designated by the faculty member
- Scribes write the answers exactly as the student speaks them, without editing of any type; the student may have her/his answer read back by the scribe and/or the scribe may ask the student to repeat a sentence or answer

### **Rights**

Students with disabilities, with appropriate documentation, have the right to be provided reasonable accommodations up to the standard of undue hardship on the University. The Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* establish the principles that individuals are equal before and under the law and should not be discriminated against in the provision of services (such as post secondary education) as a result of a physical, mental or learning disability. MSVU takes this responsibility seriously and makes its services available in a manner that does not discriminate. This obligation includes accommodations as may reasonably be required to address disadvantages to students resulting from a rule, practice, or physical barrier that has an adverse impact on a student with a disability.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Why do we accommodate?***

Disabilities (whether learning, ADHD, psychological or physical) in conjunction with some common practices, create unfair and unequal access to education. Accommodations alleviate these disadvantages to allow capable individuals to learn and to demonstrate their knowledge. Long term, equal access to education allows equal opportunity to become fully contributing members of society.

### ***Don't accommodations provide an unfair advantage?***

The purpose of accommodations is not to provide a “leg up” but to provide a “leg even”. Thus, accommodations are provided to *reduce an unfair disadvantage*. The difference between students receiving accommodations and those without accommodations is not in the academic standard that is met. Rather, it is **how** the standard is met.

### ***What if I disagree with the recommended accommodations?***

If you feel an accommodation may compromise the integrity of your course, or in some other way is unreasonable, you must contact the Coordinator of Disability Services right away. A discussion will explore how the accommodation compromises integrity and/or is considered not reasonable, and any alternative accommodations that would provide the student the support required.

In the event that an agreement concerning accommodations cannot be reached between a student with a disability, a faculty member, and Disability Services, the Equity Officer will recommend a resolution to the dispute. In determining a resolution, the Equity Officer will consult with the affected parties while considering the Mount's *Fair Treatment Policy*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the academic standards of the course or program in question.

### ***How would I recognize whether a student has a learning disability and/or ADHD?***

Often you can't. However, you may suspect a student has an LD or ADHD by their behavior. A student who shows knowledge of the subject matter, but does not seem to be able to get through the readings or falters on written assignments or tests, may raise suspicions. A student who seems motivated, but “zones out”, who is very disorganized or chronically late, or who pays attention to everything else going on around them in class, and only sporadically to the lecture, may make you suspect ADHD. When a student seems capable, but not performing to potential, consider the possibility of a learning disability or ADHD.

### ***What if I suspect a student has a learning disability and/or ADHD?***

Refer them to Disability Services. Assure them that although the title of the department is Disability Services, this does not automatically mean that they have a disability. Rather, this department may have someone to help evaluate the kind of help needed.

***I only know of one way to teach and evaluate my course. Who could help me if I want to change it?***

Staffing resources include the Teaching and Learning Centre and Disability Services. They are available to help you design your classroom, teaching, and evaluation methods. Disability Services is available for consultation as well, in particular with behavior and classroom management questions, accommodations, learning differences, and about principles of universal design.

You may also wish to do a bit of self-education. A good book to start with (available via Novanet) is “Universal design in higher education: from principles to practice” edited by Sheryl Burgstahler and Rebecca Cory.

***How do I know if I should provide accommodations for a student?***

You will receive an email entitled “Letter to Faculty-Academic Accommodations” from Disability Services, outlining accommodations for which a student has qualified. Some students, who may or may not be registered with Disability Services, may request accommodations directly to you. It is up to you whether to grant these or not. See “*Can I provide accommodations to a student on my own, without the help of Disability Services?*”

***What is “alternate formatting”?***

Alternate formatting refers to an alternate way of evaluating, often referring to written tests. It may be offering a short/long answer type of test as opposed to a multiple choice style (modified test format), or substituting a paper or take-home exam for an in-class test. This flexibility is consistent with universal design.

***What does “duty to accommodate” mean?***

The duty to accommodate applies to employers, landlords, business owners, public service providers, educational institutions, professional associations, trade unions and others. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that educational institutions have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to accommodate individual needs to the point of undue hardship. To substantiate a claim of undue hardship, the institution must show that they would experience more than a minor inconvenience. In many cases, accommodation measures are simple and affordable and do not create undue hardship.

***What is “undue hardship”?***

Undue hardship occurs if accommodation would create onerous conditions for the institution, for example, intolerable financial costs or serious disruption to business or services. The institution must make considerable effort to find an appropriate accommodation for the student. Some hardship may be necessary in making an accommodation; only when there is ‘undue’ hardship can the institution claim that they have tried all the accommodations available. There are three

factors (in Nova Scotia) to be considered in assessing whether a requested accommodation would cause undue hardship. These are (1) cost, (2) health and, (3) safety requirements.

### ***What does “universal design” mean?***

Universal design (UD) refers to proactive principles and practices that engender accessibility and inclusion as a fore thought, rather than as an afterthought. At the most basic level, it means providing options. That is, it means providing multiple and flexible methods of instruction and evaluation, so that students of varying learning styles, as well as strengths and weaknesses, can learn and be evaluated in ways that they can best do so. This approach benefits everyone – it reduces the need for professors to accommodate individual students, it helps not only students with a disability, but also many others, for example, those with cultural or language differences, distance students, students of varying ages, those who are technologically savvy and those who are not, etc.

Examples of UD:

- An instructional universal design example may be to supplement a lecture with a PowerPoint (provided before class to allow for preparation as well as during class) and to post an audio of the lecture on a password protected site for students to refer back to. Other supplements may be the provision of diagrams, graphic organizers or maps.
- Provide individualized evaluation options, such as the choice of an exam, a presentation, a podcast, or a paper. Let each student choose the method that will best allow them to demonstrate their knowledge.

### ***Can I provide accommodations to a student on my own, without the help of Disability Services?***

It is your decision to grant these accommodation requests or not, based on your knowledge of the situation, your impression of the impact on academic standard in your class and how fair you believe it to be to your other students. If you wish, you may refer them to Disability Services to apply for formal accommodations.

### ***Does Disability Services provide accommodations for English as a Second Language?***

No, this is not considered a disability. If you wish to accommodate this, you must do so on your own.

### ***Why do some students wait until the last minute to speak to me about accommodations?***

There is no one answer to this question. It may be that the student is reluctant to approach you; they may feel embarrassed by their disability or the need for accommodation. Many students with disabilities worry about others thinking that they are getting an unfair advantage. Or, they may not be sure of your reception – you can alleviate this by explicitly creating a classroom climate that lets students with disabilities know they are welcome. For some, particularly those with ADHD, planning and organization are characteristic of the disorder, so it is no surprise that

it impacts them in approaching you as well. As well, some students prefer to attempt their courses without accommodations only to realize that they in fact do need them.

***What do I do if a student with a disability misbehaves in my class or is suspected of academic misconduct?***

Behavioural issues may or may not be related to a disability. In either case, it must be dealt with fairly and immediately. If the student does not respond to your typical intervention (one that others seem to respond to), or to one that may be outlined in the student's accommodations (if this is the case), please feel free to consult with the Disability Counsellor (x6358) for support in developing a management strategy. If the behavior continues or worsens to the point that others are impacted in your classroom, you may need to contact the Coordinator of Disability Services or your Department Chair to determine a suitable course of action.

Academic misconduct is unrelated to a disability and is to be treated according to university policy.

***Why can the student with a disability not write at the same time as the class or at least on the same day?***

Unfortunately, physical space is at a premium on this campus so we are assigned rooms as available. We proctor groups of students as well as individual students who require readers/scribes and therefore must have a room to themselves. Ideally, we would have a central testing centre with one big group room and a few smaller individual rooms. Until this time comes, we take what we can get. Also, our proctors are not available all of the time.

***When students write out-of-sequence, what happens if I am unavailable for questions?***

If a student has a question, the proctor will try as best they can to contact you. If you are not available, the student is advised to indicate on the exam that they were experiencing difficulty and could not answer the question without first speaking with you. They are then advised to continue the test.

***If an accommodation is “modified test format” do I have to oblige?***

Some course material does not lend itself to certain test formats. This is why this request is usually preceded by “if possible”. However, you should always be prepared to defend your decision not to make an accommodation.

***Does extra time for tests pertain to short in-class “pop” quizzes as well as take home exams?***

Yes, although some students choose not to access their accommodations for these depending on the severity or nature of their disability, “Pop” quizzes can be coordinated with the Disability Resource Facilitator ahead of time without the student's knowledge. Please be cognizant that maintaining the student's confidentiality may be particularly difficult if you choose this manner

of evaluation.

***Students with disabilities who are given extra time for tests, as an accommodation do not always use this time. Why is this?***

This is another question that the answer may vary depending on the student. It may be that the format of the test or the content area is one in which the student has a cognitive or learning strength. It may be that the student chooses to not access her or his right to accommodation in order to not stand out from others in the class. It may be that you allow enough time to write the test and so the student does not have to be accommodated for your test.

***If a student with a disability is permitted to audio tape my lecture, shouldn't other students be permitted?***

Absolutely, if you wish to let them. A proactive approach (an example of universal design) to this may be to record each class yourself and either email it to students as a group after each class or post it to a password protected site (such as Moodle) for all your students to refer to as needed. With the proliferation of technology available, it is important to be cognizant that every lecture could be recorded whether you know it, permit it, or not. For more information, please see *MSVU Agreement to Audio-record Classes*, Appendix A.

***What happens to students with disabilities after they graduate?***

They become well-educated, contributing members of society whose taxes will help pay for our roads, hospital care, and old age pension!

Students with disabilities continue to experience challenges as they become employees with disabilities. However, employment opportunities and legislation are changing, and the workforce increasingly promises to become a place where diverse members of society can work and contribute according to their strengths.

***Are students with disabilities just as successful as their peers?***

Academically, yes, they can be, when properly accommodated. Oftentimes, but not always, students with disabilities take longer to finish their degree (refer back to the speed issue mentioned earlier).

## **Teaching Strategies**

### **In-Class or Instructional**

- Post policies on the syllabus, and review during the first week. For example, develop and post a policy for class discussions or questions (i.e. so that there is a policy to fall back on if a student is dominating discussion, asking more questions than reasonable, or

perseverating on a topic). Explicitly communicate expectations, assignments, and homework.

- Provide notice of texts used for the class, or access to online material, ahead of schedule to allow students to work at their own pace (i.e. some may need to get started sooner than others). Ensure notes provided online are in a text-based accessible format (i.e. can be read by a screen reader).
- Make an effort to meet with the student and discuss their needs in the classroom.
- Put an invitation on your syllabus and orally re-iterate it during the first couple of classes. E.g. “Students who have a disability and who require academic accommodations must register with Disability Services in Evaristus 218 or by calling 457-6567. As well, please see me to ensure that I can help provide your accommodations”.
- Provide office hours in a variety of formats (in person, or online through email or chat rooms, etc.). This helps students in multiple situations access support – e.g. single parent who must get back to babysitter, student with anxiety, student who must work during office hours).
- Offer assistance/extra help or suggest other support resources. Try to be approachable and aware of how intimidating a professor may be to some students.
- An overview of the lesson provided beforehand may help students stay on task.
- Provide students with copies of lecture notes prior to class.
- Break assignments into smaller parts with individual deadlines. Clearly document all deadlines on the syllabus at the beginning of term and review with the class at the beginning of term.
- Vary the method of teaching to keep students interested. Teach the same concept in multiple formats (e.g. lecture on a topic, hands-on activity, role-playing, in-class debate, brainstorming, cooperative learning activity, etc.)
- Make use of visual aids in the classroom (e.g. power point presentations, diagrams, etc)
- Visual presentations should be accompanied by verbal explanations or descriptions.
- Verbal presentations should be accompanied by visual supports (pictures, charts, diagrams, etc.).
- Make use of three-dimensional models to illustrate concepts rather than two-dimensional materials
- For students who may miss class time, try to communicate with the individual directly about assignments and other important information
- Provide closed captioning on videos. This helps students at the back, with attention difficulties, with auditory processing or hearing difficulties, etc.
- For students with a hearing impairment, avoid ‘teaching to the board’ – face students when lecturing as much as possible and do not over-enunciate words (for students who rely on lip-reading, it is much easier for them if the instructor speaks naturally)
- For students with partial hearing loss, speak clearly and audibly

- For students with speech impairments, slowed auditory processing, or processing speed difficulties (which you may not be aware of), be patient and allow them the time needed to express opinions and ideas or ask questions.
- Ask the class to refrain from wearing scents.
- Be watchful – take note of potential difficulties you may see arising and address them early and respectfully. Ex. if you notice a hard of hearing student regularly seated at the back of the class, change seating arrangement to a circle.
- Evaluate class grasp of material regularly, and adjust your teaching accordingly (ex. review a concept not well-grasped by the students before moving on to a more difficult and related concept).
- Briefly summarize each lecture at the end of class.
- Consider holding optional review sessions before exams, to cover difficult-to-grasp material, as well as important topics or concepts.

## **Syllabus**

- Present information in at least two different accessibility formats. This can be done by distributing a syllabus in paper format at the beginning of the course as well as on the website, in an e-mail, or on a CD, etc.
- Provide students with information and resources. For example, along with a list of required texts, list places where students might find the text.
- Provide adequate information, but keep it brief. Provide only the necessary facts of the course. If extra information is required, make a separate hand-out.
- Provide information redundantly. That is, provide information in manners that appeal to both visual and verbal learners. For example, this can be done by highlighting due dates and providing your schedule on a graphic calendar.

## **Evaluation**

- Alternative formats for assignments and tests may be helpful (ex. oral instead of written).
- Choice of format for assignments and tests, provided on test for all students (ex. choice of multiple choice or essay responses, etc.).
- Choice of evaluation methods (ex. choice of exam, or in-class presentation, or research assignment, or project, etc.).
- Allow students to complete assignments in various formats and/or a format that best works for them. Ex. Non-technological or technological. Ex. Graphic or Written.
- Develop tests/exams that will allow for automatic double-time. For example, develop a one-hour test; allow two hours for completion by all students. This allows most students to write with their class.
- Be flexible about how and when classroom tasks or assignments are completed.

- Scaffold assignments – implement a series of tasks that develop the skills students need to acquire, and provide feedback throughout the development of the assignment, before the final assignment is due.
- Create a clear rubric of expectations – for example, what an “A” paper and a “B” paper, etc. will look like. Provide examples.
- Provide study tips, verbally and written, and samples of test/exam questions.

### **Resources & Websites**

MSVU Disability Services:

[www.msvu.ca/disabilityservices](http://www.msvu.ca/disabilityservices)

MSVU Policy for Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

[www.msvu.ca/dspolicy](http://www.msvu.ca/dspolicy)

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) Center:

[www.washington.edu/doi](http://www.washington.edu/doi)

Learning Disability Association of Canada:

[www.ldac-acta.ca](http://www.ldac-acta.ca)

Learning Disability Association of Nova Scotia:

[www.ldans.ca](http://www.ldans.ca)

Canadian Association of Disability Service Providers in Post-secondary Education:

[www.cacuss.ca/en/divisions/CADSPPE/resources.htm](http://www.cacuss.ca/en/divisions/CADSPPE/resources.htm)

Universal Instructional Design at the University of Guelph:

[www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid](http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid)

Queen's University - Accommodation and Instruction Strategies for Instructors:

[http://library.queensu.ca/websrs/faculty\\_guide-Strategies.html](http://library.queensu.ca/websrs/faculty_guide-Strategies.html)

APPENDIX A

**MSVU Agreement to Audio-record Classes  
(between instructor, student, and university)**

The following agreement is aimed to protect the integrity and quality of the teaching environment, the interests of the University, the instructor, and students.

**For students with a documented disability only**, and in the spirit of reasonable accommodation, this agreement grants permission to audio-record a class provided that this agreement is signed by the student, instructor, and the Coordinator of Disability Services as a representative of Mount Saint Vincent University.

Students are also advised that audio-recording in class during discussions may infringe on the privacy of other students. Therefore, all students in the class will be informed that audio-recording is being conducted. In certain cases, there may be concern in audio-recording some classes (or portions of classes) that involve personal discussion and self-disclosure by students, fearing that audio recorders will inhibit the free exchange of information. However, because the ability to audio-record is necessary as a substitute for note-taking by the accommodated student, it would be unfair to require the accommodated student to stop recording while allowing other students to continue taking notes. Therefore, at the discretion of the instructor both note-taking and audio-recording may be prohibited during classes or portions of classes which involve personal discussion and self disclosure.

The student to whom this permission is granted will agree to the following:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will take responsibility to safeguard the instructor’s intellectual property seriously

1. by using the audio-recording for my private studies only;
2. by never sharing the audio-recording with other people;
3. by never using the audio-recording in a malicious way against the instructor or against students whose classroom comments are taped as part of class activity;
4. by never reproducing the audio-recording in any way, publishing, selling, or quoting the information recorded and;
5. by immediately erasing the audio tapes when no longer needed or, at the latest, at the end of the course.

**I understand that violating this agreement will result in withdrawing permission to audio-record lectures and may lead to denial of similar requests in the future.**

I have read and understood the above agreement. I agree that I will abide by the above stated terms of this agreement.

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator of Disability Services \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_