Facilitating Success for Students With Disabilities

St. Cloud Technical & Community College

Judy Jacobson Berg, Counselor for Students with Disabilities
John Bjork, Accommodations Specialist
# Instructor’s Role in Providing Accommodations

## What are accommodations?
A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment that allows an individual with a disability to access course material and demonstrate course knowledge in spite of the disability. An accommodation does not alter the fundamental course outcomes.

## Who is eligible for accommodations?
Students with documented disabilities are eligible to request accommodations specific to their needs. Federal laws require this college to provide equal access and opportunity to all students.

## How do I know which students have disabilities?
You will only know about a student’s disability if that student chooses to share that information with you. Because of privacy laws, the student with a disability is in charge of that information. Generally the specific accommodation, not the disability itself, is what the student will share. Accommodations are considered private and are not something that an instructor can discuss around other students. Some students with disabilities choose not to disclose the disability or to request any services.

## What should I do when a student tells me that s/he had an “IEP,” or has a disability?
The student who speaks with you about a disability should have a SCTCC Disability Accommodations Plan from Judy Jacobson Berg, Counselor for Students with Disabilities. Ask the student to see this plan. You and the student can discuss how the indicated accommodations will best fit the course or, set a meeting with the student and Judy to arrange for appropriate solutions. If the student does not have a plan, refer him/her to Judy. A plan, specific to that student, is developed using official documentation of the disability. Accommodations must be prearranged by the student. There is no obligation to provide accommodations retroactively. Accommodations should not be provided to students without the appropriate documentation and plan on file.

## What are some typical accommodations and what is my role in providing them?
- **Reduced credit load**
  Accommodations may include changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree or diploma requirements. In some cases, a part time schedule may be all a student needs to accommodate their disability.
### Audio Recorder
Digital recording of class lectures and discussions may be a necessary accommodation for some students. If a student’s disability supports the use of a recorder, faculty must allow it. Recorders are specifically mentioned in law as a means of providing full participation in educational programs and activities. Typically, any classroom material on which a student would take notes may be recorded. Occasionally, classroom discussion reveals items of a personal nature about students. In this case, it would be appropriate to discretely ask the student with a disability to turn off the recorder.

### Seating
A student with a physical disability who cannot use standard classroom chairs, desks or tables may need a modified classroom space. Others may need seating close to the instructor, interpreter or the door. The instructor’s role may be simply to assist the student in reserving a chair or table space for his/her specific needs.

### Notetaker
A student with a disability may qualify and ask you for a notetaker. Your role is to identify another student, enrolled in the course, who appears to take good notes and who may be receptive to sharing their notes. Ask that student, in confidence and without disclosing the name of the student with a disability, if they are willing to volunteer to share their notes with another student. Refer the notetaker to John Bjork, Accommodations Specialist, rm. 1-135. John will scan the notetaker’s notes and email them to the student with a disability.

### Sign Language Interpreters
Students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may use an American Sign Language interpreter to access instruction. The instructor should speak directly to the student rather than to the interpreter. Audio material presented in class or through D2L, must be captioned or transcribed.

### Extended Time on Tests
When a recommended accommodation is additional time on tests or a distraction-reduced testing site, instructors may choose to proctor the exam themselves or arrangements can be made to have the student test with Disabilities Services. The student must request this accommodation 3 days in advance each time they wish to have an accommodated test by completing the request form and scheduling a testing appointment with John Bjork. The student will present the request form to you. Please complete it with your instructions. You then provide the test to John by the scheduled test date.
**Testing in Different Format or Alternative Methods of Recording Answers**
In some cases an alternative testing method will be an approved accommodation for a student. Examples are permitting a student to listen to the test questions or to type or speak answers into a computer. Permitting students to show their mastery of the subject matter using an alternative testing method may be a necessary accommodation, provided that the change in method doesn’t fundamentally alter the educational program. If you have concerns speak to John or Judy to negotiate a resolution for the student’s request.

**Can I refuse to accommodate the student?**
A student who has provided the college with appropriate information and developed a plan that indicates specific accommodations, is eligible. State and Federal laws, and MnSCU policy require colleges to provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students are still required to meet the essential objectives of the course as guided by the instructor’s syllabus. If you feel an approved accommodation comprises an essential element of your course, please contact Judy Jacobson Berg to discuss other options.

**Serve all students**
Many accommodations become unnecessary when faculty use principles of Universal Design that may help all students. For example
- Use large black print on a white or light background
- Use D2L to provide lecture outlines and copies of slides and visuals to all students
- Keep your classroom physically barrier free and well lit

### Campus Contacts

Judy Jacobson Berg, Counselor  
Rm. 1-401-V  
320-308-5096  
jjacobsonberg@sctcc.edu

John Bjork,  
Accommodations Specialist  
Rm 1-133  
320-308-5757  
jbjork@sctcc.edu

This material is available in alternative format by request. Contact Judy Jacobson Berg at 320-308-5096 or jjacobsonberg@sctcc.edu.

Further information is available at www.sctcc.edu/disability