DISABILITY AWARENESS
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PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

- About 49 million Americans (one out of every five individuals) have a disability.
- People with disabilities developed preferred terminology called PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE.
  - It eliminates generalizations, assumptions and stereotypes by focusing on the person rather than the disability. People First Language refers to the individual first and disability second.
  - Use People First Language to tell what a person HAS, not what a person IS.

(Utah Developmental Disabilities People First Web page-Adult Language Booklet)
## Disability Law

|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| • signed into law in July 1990 and with it came a mandate to end discrimination against individuals with disabilities. | • national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability (civil rights law)  
• allows for reasonable accommodation | • The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. It protections against discrimination similar to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and other characteristics illegal. Disability is defined by the ADA as "...a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity."  
• The ADAAA (2008) makes changes to the definition of the term "disability," clarifying and broadening that definition. |

(https://www.ada.gov/)
THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

Who we are:

- The designated campus unit that works with enrolled students who have disabilities.
- ODS reviews documentation submitted by students and determines student eligibility for classroom accommodations designed to help remediate the limiting effects of disability in the academic arena.

What we do:

- We work with students to determine reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations for disabilities so that students are evaluated based upon their knowledge of course material, not based upon the limiting effects of disability.
Who is eligible:

- Any student with a physical or mental condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities is potentially eligible. Before eligibility can be determined, students must first present documentation to ODS as per the documentation requirements on our website (www.ods.ua.edu). The condition can be permanent or temporary, stable or progressive.

- Representative disability types may include but are not limited to learning disabilities, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders, chronic illnesses, and mobility, sensory and psychological disabilities.
Typical Services:

- Services are based upon disability type and determination of eligibility. Once eligible students have met with ODS personnel, they will receive official letters listing appropriate accommodations. Students request classroom accommodations by presenting the letters to their faculty members and by discussing implementation of accommodations with them. Faculty members are not obligated to provide accommodations until the letters are presented by the students. Accommodations are not retroactive.
ODS Academic Year 2016-2017

- 1,757 students registered with the Office of Disability Services
  - 85% undergraduate
  - 15% graduate
- 50 individual test rooms
- 7,164 tests taken at the ODS Testing Center
FAQS FOR FACULTY

Who determines if a student has a qualifying disability that requires reasonable accommodation?

Faculty members, instructors, and graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) do not. ODS requires diagnostic documentation from a licensed clinical professional familiar with the history and functional implications of the student’s respective disabilities. ODS determines if the documentation is acceptable and whether reasonable accommodations should be provided.
FAQS FOR FACULTY

What do I do if the student identifies himself/herself to me as having a disability—Do I decide if the student is entitled to an accommodation?

No. Students who merely identify themselves as having a disability to instructors, but who do not have accommodation letters from ODS, are NOT generally eligible for services (i.e., reasonable accommodations). Faculty members should immediately refer such students to ODS to procure accommodation letters.
Should I discuss reasonable accommodations in my class session?

Regarding a specific student, No! That could possibly violate FERPA, ADA, and § 504. Instructors must respect the privacy of students with disabilities and avoid mentioning accommodations in front of others.
FAQS FOR FACULTY

When am I on notice that I must provide a particular accommodation?

The ODS issues accommodation letters after documentation of a student’s disability has been reviewed and accepted. The student is responsible for delivering the accommodation letters to each instructor in whose course the student is requesting accommodations, and to discuss with those instructors which academic adjustments s/he intends to use in each class.

Instructors are not obligated to provide academic adjustments until they have received the letters. If the letter arrives only within a few days of an exam, the instructor is obliged to “do the best you can” in providing reasonable academic adjustments on short notice.
FAQS FOR FACULTY

What do I do once I have been presented with an accommodation letter?

Provide the accommodations noted on the letter, and no others! Do not question the student about his/her need for the accommodation approved on the letter or your personal philosophy about the ADA. You are encouraged, however, to be sure that you and the student mutually understand and agree upon the specific details of implementation (when, where, how). Providing reasonable academic adjustments is a collaborative process between the student and his/her instructor.

For example, administration of exams, quizzes or in-class writing assignments with extended time and/or reduced-distraction accommodations should be at a time and location that is appropriate and efficient for both the student and the instructor. Reduced-distraction settings for exams should, if at all possible, be provided in the faculty member’s own department. ODS also maintains a testing area as a service to faculty members where students can take tests with accommodations.
FAQS FOR FACULTY

Can I see the student’s documentation filed with ODS?

No. It is NEVER appropriate to ask the student about the nature of his/her disability. Disability-related information is treated as confidential and cannot be released without the informed, written consent of the student.
What if I disagree with the accommodation the student has requested and ODS has recommended?

The University has a legal obligation to make an effort to provide effective and reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities who are otherwise qualified. Consequently, instructors are not allowed to choose whether or not to provide reasonable accommodations for students who present accommodation letters from ODS. Ignoring the accommodation letter could expose the University to a lawsuit and the instructor to personal liability (possibly at the instructor’s own cost for legal defense). ODS considers ALL faculty questions and concerns about implementing reasonable accommodations, and works with faculty members to tailor accommodations to individual course requirements, if possible.
THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

For more information:

- Email: ods@ua.edu
- www.ods.ua.edu
- (205) 348-4285
- 1000 Houser Hall (across the street from the Ferguson Center)
RESOURCES ON CAMPUS

- Because ODS authorizes academic accommodations, students with disability-related housing, dining, and parking needs should contact these departments directly:
  - UA Housing (205) 348-6676
  - Bama Dining (205) 348-6816
  - UA Parking Services (205) 348-5471
  - University Compliance Officer/ ADA Hotline (205) 348-5882

- In addition to consulting with ODS, contact your academic department head and the ADA/504 Liaison in your college. These liaisons can provide information on campus resources for students with disabilities and assist faculty in implementing reasonable academic adjustments. Consult [http://eop.ua.edu/coordinators.html](http://eop.ua.edu/coordinators.html) for a current list of ADA/504 Liaisons.