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Office of Student Disability Serv

Dear Faculty –

The University of Massachusetts, Lowell (“UML”) is committed to creating an academic community where students with disabilities will have an equal opportunity to participate, contribute, and benefit from its academic programs. Accordingly students with a disability may contact the Office of Students Disability Services (“OSDS”) regarding a request for a reasonable accommodation. The Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA:”) requires institutions of higher education to provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Developing independence and simulating the real-world that lies beyond the college classroom are at the forefront of our mission to prepare students for life beyond UMass Lowell. We are here to help you meet the needs of our students with disabilities and, to that end, wish to remind faculty and staff of the following:

Faculty is strongly advised to provide reasonable accommodations only upon approval of OSDS and if the student brings proper faculty notification from OSDS. Students requesting an accommodation must be referred to OSDS. Reasonable accommodations should be provided to students with disabilities at the time the faculty is notified with an appropriate letter of accommodations from ODS. Faculty is not obligated to interact directly with outside agencies such as psychologists, medical practitioners, parents and/or other educational institutions. If approached directly, you should redirect the calls to the OSDS.

What is an accommodation?

Generally, accommodation(s) are reasonable modifications or adjustments in the academic process which enables a student with disabilities to enjoy equal access to academic opportunities. Accommodations are not intended to nor will they be used to give a student an unfair advantage. A student with disabilities may request an accommodation in the form of an academic adjustment, auxiliary aids or services. Reasonable accommodations are provided as determined by a student’s disability and individual needs. Reasonable accommodations may include but are not limited to

- additional test time
- distraction reduced environment
- use of computer in taking test
- use of a calculator
- use of a formula sheet (if the formulae are not being tested)
- testing via audio tape (questions and answering on tape)
- scribe

- proctoring exams by Office of Disability Services
- note-taker

Some typical classroom accommodations

- note-taker
- taping lectures
- hard copies of overheads prior to scheduled use
- preferential seating
- accessible classroom
- audio devices worn by faculty and students (for students with hearing loss)

What is additional test time or extended time on tests/quizzes?

Additional test time is generally half to double time added to the regularly allotted test time. Example: If the regular test time is for an hour, then the accommodation is either an hour and a half or two hours. UMass Lowell does not support unlimited time. Extended time applies only to quizzes/ tests and not to classroom assignments, group projects, homework, or term papers. Individualized accommodations will be discussed with you as they arise. The OSDS conjunction with University policy, does not permit re-testing because a student is dissatisfied with a grade earned unless faculty have a re-test option available for all students.

What is distraction reduced environment?

A separate, quiet room, uninterrupted by traffic, noise, and other sensory stimuli. This can include empty office space within a department, conference room, etc. The OSDS will help administer the exam if such a room is unavailable.

Proctoring by the Office of Disability Services

The OSDS will proctor exams if the faculty member is unable to accommodate a student for any reason. Please refer to the Exam Proctoring Form for all details.

Absenteeism/Tardiness

Tardiness is **NOT** an accommodation. Absenteeism is **NOT** an accommodation unless in selective cases these have been approved by the OSDS and discussed with the instructor. Obviously, a published attendance policy lends clarity and accountability to the process. Please publish quiz/exam dates and project expectations. The clearer the syllabus, the less room there is for misinterpretation of course expectations.

Tape recording

For many disabled students tape recording lecture material is a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students registered with the OSDS will present a Tape Recording Agreement form to each instructor in each class that is to be taped.

Class Cancellation Policy

OSDS suggests publishing the University's school cancellation line: (978) 934-2121 in the syllabus. Some hearing impaired/deaf students require the services of Sign Language Interpreters. Cancellation of this service requires 24-hour notification or the University is financially liable. Whenever possible, please notify the student directly or Disability Services;

and we will contact the student and the interpreters. Many students with physical disabilities rely on family, friends, hired or public transportation to get to and from campus. Although not necessary, it is immeasurably helpful to notify a student of an unplanned class cancellation. A phone call from an instructor (or an office staff member) can save a physically disabled student time, money and energy.

Foreign Language Substitution

A substitution of a foreign language requirement may be a reasonable accommodation for a student with a language-based learning disability, deafness, and/or a substantial loss of hearing. A language requirement that is determined not to be an integral part of the degree to be granted to the student may be substituted for another class. Determination for a foreign language substitution is made by OSDS with proper notification to the department chair.

Notified Absence

A Notified Absence informs a faculty member that a student (any student) has notified the OSDS that he/or she has missed a minimum of four (4) days of school due to illness, death in the family, etc.. The form's only purpose is to notify you. It does not, in any way, serve to excuse the student from academic obligations.

On-line classes

Accommodations for on-line classes are typically extended time on tests. Please contact Continuing Education Technology specialist to find out about setting your computers to extended time on tests.

The Office of Student Disability Services encourages faculty to use the OSDS as a resource for questions, clarifications, discussion of a student's learning style/strategies, and/or any other areas of concern.

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