Center for Student Accessibility:
Working with College Students with Disabilities

A Guide for Faculty
Center for Student Accessibility:
Working with College Students with Disabilities

A Guide for Faculty

Welcome to the College of Staten Island (CSI). As a faculty member, you will certainly experience many different kinds of students here at the College. This Guide has been created to assist you specifically in working with college students with different disabilities.

Please keep this Guide for reference, and contact us with any questions or concerns (see last page for full contact information)—in fact that is exactly what we want you to do! If you are unsure about what a reasonable accommodation is, please contact us.

Please also keep in mind that you may encounter students with disabilities who are not registered with our Center.

The Center for Student Accessibility (CSA) at CSI is here to support students with documented disabilities and serve as a resource for faculty members who need assistance in working with our registered students.

This Guide will provide some basic information for faculty members.

So, here’s what we do…

The CSA provides reasonable accommodations and services to matriculated students and students in college preparatory programs at the College of Staten Island who have a documented disability.
What does that mean, you may ask?

Well, according to federal law, individuals with a disability or disabilities are eligible for certain accommodations. Our Center is here to make sure those accommodations are in place.

We are also here to ensure that all faculty members have a resource for questions, concerns, inquiries, and anything else that may occur during the semester.

Here are some of the things that the CSA does:

FOR STUDENTS

• Testing accommodations for students who may need extra time or a distraction-limited location.
• One-on-one tutoring for students who need supplemental support such as help studying or writing and revising essays.
• Collaboration with professors if there is an issue that may benefit from supportive intervention.
• Technology training for students who may need assistive technology or special devices.

FOR FACULTY

• Provide informative letters indicating that a student with a disability is in your course. (It is at the student’s discretion to allow this communication and some students choose to speak with professors themselves.)
• One-on-one support via phone, email, or in person to assist with any problems or concerns you may have.
• Scheduled workshops and professional development on a variety of topics to help you work best with students with disabilities.
A Mini Glossary of Common Terms

**Accommodations** – Mandated by federal law, these include testing accommodations, ASL interpreting, and CART provision.

**ADA** – The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation.*

**Alternate Text Conversion** – Some students with disabilities may need a textbook or other print materials converted (usually by our Center) to a different and more accessible format such as Braille or audio.

**ASL Interpreting** – American Sign Language interpreters accompany students who are deaf or hard of hearing to their courses to serve as a translator or interpreter.

**Assistive Technology** – Certain devices, such as a closed-circuit television (CCTV) or even an iPad, can help students with disabilities in their courses. It is important to note that these devices are only utilized for coursework during class.

**CART** – “Communication Access Real-time Translation” providers use speech-to-text technology so that students who are deaf or hard of hearing can view class discussions on a screen.

**Digital Pen** – This assistive technology is equipped with a digital recorder so that a student may record class lectures and discussions. Many digital pens can also video record the student’s notes in a digital notebook, which can be uploaded to a computer or laptop.

**IDEA Act** – The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.**

**Note-taker** – A person who attends class with a student with a disability who cannot take adequate notes (typically a student who is deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or who has a particular physical disability).

**Peer Note-taker** – Performs the same duties as a note-taker, but is a student already registered in the course. This student can report to the CSA for a small stipend at the end of the semester.

**Self-Advocacy** – While the CSA is in place to make sure that students with disabilities receive accommodations and services, the Center also stresses that students self-advocate or take the initiative and responsibility for their success in college. This includes urging students to work with professors and other offices on campus without the intervention of the CSA.

**Service Dog** – Many students who are blind or visually impaired or have any kind of seizure disorder may have a service dog accompany them to college classes. These animals are trained and certified to assist individuals with disabilities in navigating the environment.

**Services** – Unlike accommodations, services are not federally mandated by law. These include things like tutoring and academic counseling.

**Universal Design** – This principle asserts that strategies that are useful for individuals with a disability or disabilities are useful for all individuals. (See page 7 in this Guide for more information and tips on Universal Design.)

* U.S. Department of Justice
** U.S. Department of Education
Sensitivity and Confidentiality

Some students have experienced the feeling of having a stigma attached to their disabilities. From peers to professors, there can sometimes be an uncertainty regarding the best way to address and engage with students with disabilities. Here are some tips on sensitivity and confidentiality that can help make the college experience comfortable for students with disabilities.

### SAY:
- Student with a disability
- Student who is registered at the CSA
- Student who is deaf
- Student who is blind

*(This puts the student first and NOT the disability.)*

### DON’T SAY:
- Disabled student
- Handicapped student
- Blind student

*(These terms are dated and also place emphasis on the student’s disability rather than the individual student.)*

### SOME OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:
- Don’t call a student’s disability to other’s attention.
- Don’t say “You don’t look like you have a disability.”
- Don’t set time constraints on tests or assignments before the accommodations are known.
- Don’t ask the entire class aloud, “Who else needs an accommodation?”

Please note that there are two exceptions: Individuals who identify with the Autistic and Deaf communities may view their disability as part of their identity. In this case, it would be appropriate to say “autistic student” or “deaf student.”
## Different Kinds of Disabilities...
And What That May Mean in the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF DISABILITY</th>
<th>WHAT IT IS</th>
<th>WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Disability (LD)</strong></td>
<td>Students with LDs have difficulty processing information and with memory.</td>
<td>Students may take quizzes and exams at the CSA with extended time and in a distraction-limited location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To learn more about learning disabilities…</strong></td>
<td>Please visit the National Center for Learning Disabilities Website:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncld.org">www.ncld.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological Disability</strong></td>
<td>Students with psychological disabilities may be diagnosed with anxiety, depression, or bipolar disorder, to name a few.</td>
<td>Students may appear nervous or withdrawn; students may also be overly enthusiastic or overzealous in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To learn more about psychological disabilities…</strong></td>
<td>Please visit the American Psychological Association Website:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.apa.org">www.apa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blind or Visually Impaired</strong></td>
<td>Students may be legally blind from birth or have a degenerative disease. They may have some vision or none at all.</td>
<td>Students may be accompanied by a service animal or use a cane. Often they will have a note-taker in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To learn more about blind or visually impaired students…</strong></td>
<td>Please visit the National Federation of the Blind Website:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nfb.org">www.nfb.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deaf or Hard of Hearing</strong></td>
<td>Students may have some hearing loss or may have no hearing at all.</td>
<td>Students may have a cochlear implant and may be accompanied by an ASL interpreter or CART service provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To learn more about deaf or hard-of-hearing students…</strong></td>
<td>Please visit the National Association of the Deaf Website:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nad.org">www.nad.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Disability</strong></td>
<td>Students may have a physical impairment such as cerebral palsy or may have an injury.</td>
<td>Students may use a wheelchair or leg braces and may require a large desk in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To learn more about physical disabilities…</strong></td>
<td>Please visit this Website:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ahead.org">www.ahead.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)</strong></td>
<td>Students on the autism spectrum may have a pervasive developmental disorder such as autism or Asperger syndrome.</td>
<td>Students may have difficulty relating to their peers and group work may be difficult; students may also dominate conversations and focus on a particular topic or point at length.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To learn more about ASDs…</strong></td>
<td>Please visit the National Institute of Mental Health Website:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nimh.nih.gov">www.nimh.nih.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADD and ADHD</strong></td>
<td>Students with ADD or ADHD exhibit behaviors such as distractibility, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.</td>
<td>Students may have trouble focusing on coursework; students may request testing accommodations and tutoring at the CSA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To learn more about ADD and ADHDs…</strong></td>
<td>Please visit the Attention Deficit Disorder Association Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.add.org">www.add.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# CSA’s Academic Calendar at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The semester</td>
<td>You may receive a letter indicating that one of your students is registered at the CSA.</td>
<td>As tests and quizzes approach, you may receive a testing accommodation form from students who need extra time or a distraction-limited location. This is necessary for students to take tests and quizzes in our Center.</td>
<td>Students registered at the CSA receive priority registration. Our students receive letters that academic advisement is available for them at the CSA. Please note that we urge students to receive departmental advisement as well.</td>
<td>As the semester draws to a close, we urge you to check in with your students and the CSA. Also, selecting your textbooks as early as possible gives students with print impairments time to get the texts in an alternate format.</td>
<td>The semester begins! Think about adding a small paragraph about the CSA in your syllabus. [See page 9 of this Guide for a sample syllabus statement.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| You may receive a letter indicating that one of your students is registered at the CSA. | As tests and quizzes approach, you may receive a testing accommodation form from students who need extra time or a distraction-limited location. This is necessary for students to take tests and quizzes in our Center. | **DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH**
Look for posters and flyers advertising our many events! Students registered at the CSA receive priority registration. Our students receive letters that academic advisement is available for them at the CSA. Please note that we urge students to receive departmental advisement as well. | As the semester draws to a close, we urge you to check in with your students and the CSA. | CSA Summer Institute: This new student orientation is separate from the mandatory CSI New Student Orientation. It is open to all new students registered with the CSA and focuses on issues such as the differences in disability service provision from high school to college. | CSA Summer Institute: This new student orientation is separate from the mandatory CSI New Student Orientation. It is open to all new students registered with the CSA and focuses on issues such as the differences in disability service provision from high school to college. |
Some Quick Tips on Universal Design

To make your classroom experience more accessible for students with disabilities as well as more enriching for ALL students, here are some tips to keep in mind.

Please note that this is not a checklist of things you are required to use in your course; these are suggestions for a more accessible and successful educational environment.

- Put a statement in your syllabus inviting students to meet with you to discuss disability-related accommodations and other learning needs; talk with students with disabilities about what they may need to be successful in the class.
- Face the class and speak clearly.
- Utilize reading strategies.
- Assure that all classrooms, labs, and fieldwork are in locations accessible to individuals with a wide range of physical abilities and disabilities.
- Use multiple modes to deliver content (including lecture, discussion, hands-on activities, Internet-based interaction, and fieldwork).
- Provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate knowledge.
- Provide printed or Web-based materials that summarize content that is delivered orally.
- Provide printed materials in electronic format.
- Use accessible Web pages (text descriptions of graphics).
- Provide printed materials early so students can prepare to access the materials in alternate formats.
- Create printed and Web-based materials in simple, consistent formats.
- Provide effective prompting during an activity, and feedback after the assignment is completed.
- Orally explain assignments in class and in writing.
- Make your tangible goals and expectations clear from the beginning.
- Use captioned videos.
- Make sure equipment and activities minimize sustained physical effort.
Did you know...?

Students with a Learning Disability (LD), an invisible disability, represent approximately 70% of the CSA’s registered students. There is a good chance that you will encounter a student with an LD in one or more of your courses.
Sample Syllabus Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Center for Student Accessibility at 718.982.2510 or visit the Center in 1P-101. You can also check out their Website at www.csi.cuny.edu/csa/.

Web Accessibility

University rules mandate that all Web pages intended for the public meet and exceed accessibility and usability standards that have been set forth by both the state and federal government.

There are lots of ways that people with disabilities use the Web, since there are many different disabilities to consider. People who are deaf or hard-of-hearing need captions, but captions are also useful for people without speakers on their computer. People who are blind or visually impaired will use screen readers, such as JAWS. People whose vision has been compromised may use add-on tools to increase font size. Those with cognitive disabilities may take longer to process the information on a single Web page, so clearly organized content helps greatly.
Communications That You May Receive from the CSA

The CSA sends various confidential letters to professors throughout the course of the semester. Be sure to check your email and office mailboxes for these important communications. This is another way in which the Center strives to collaborate with professors on a variety of issues.

- Disclosure Letter: This letter indicates that a student with a disability is registered in your course. It is meant to be an introductory letter and will provide contact information for the student’s CSA Academic Counselor. No action is required on your part, and you do not have to contact the academic counselor.

- Digital Pen Letter: This letter indicates that a student in your course will be utilizing a digital pen that has been provided by the CSA. Professors reserve the right to ask students not to utilize these pens as the devices do record all audio. Please note that only students using CSA-issued pens will provide this letter.

- CART Letter: This letter indicates that a student in your course will be using Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) services. A CART provider may be present in the classroom or may be providing services remotely.

- ASL Letter: This letter indicates that a student in your course will be using an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. The interpreter will typically sit in the front of the class, face the student who is deaf or hard of hearing, and translate all spoken words.

- Note-taker Letter: This letter indicates that a student in your course will receive note-taking services in the class. A note-taker will be present in the classroom and write down the information on the blackboard or video screen, or from the lecture. This is helpful for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or have a physical disability. The note-taker may be a student at the College or a professional staff member.

- Peer Note-taker Letter: This letter is a request for you and the student registered in our office to attempt to identify a student already in your course who can share their notes with the student registered at the CSA. This student will receive a stipend at the end of the semester from the CSA.

- Alternate Text Letter: This letter is a request for your syllabus or list of texts that you will be assigning throughout the semester. This is helpful for students with print impairments who need to access the course materials in an alternate format such as Braille or audio.
Testing Accommodations Form

One of the most common accommodations provided at the CSA is testing accommodations. Students may receive extended time and a distraction-limited location, and other accommodations, depending on the documentation on file.

Each student is responsible for filling out this form and requesting that their professor sign and date it. The student must provide this form at least three days in advance of a test or quiz so that their accommodations can be arranged.

Please note, if you give regular weekly quizzes, you can turn in one form that indicates this, and we will keep it on file.

On the first page of the form, the student will fill out all information and the professor indicates how the test will be delivered to the CSA. Then just sign and date.

On the second page of the form, the student will fill out all information, and the professor indicates what is allowed on the test (notes, dictionary, etc). Then just sign and date. This page should ideally serve as a cover sheet when the test is delivered to the CSA.
Here’s a quick tip!
The Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) is the leading national organization in providing information and most effective methods for working with college students with disabilities.

You can visit their Website at www.ahead.org.