

# STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES HANDBOOK FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

Equal Access for all

## **Student Affairs: Creating opportunities for student success!**

The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.



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## Preface

This handbook is intended as an information and resource guide for academic staff members at the University of Manitoba. It may also be a useful guide for senior and academic administrators and staff who wish to learn more about services at the University for students with disabilities.

Student Accessibility Services provides services and support to over 1500 students each year<sup>1</sup>. In this handbook, we will discuss the diverse disabilities that are represented within that population, including Deaf and hard of hearing, blindness and visual impairments, mobility impairments, chronic illness, medical conditions, learning disabilities, ADHD, autism spectrum, psychological and mental health, and temporary disabilities. Alongside this, we will describe reasonable accommodations that are commonly put in place in learning environments (e.g. classroom, labs, practicum etc.,) and for tests and examinations for each of those student groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Student Accessibility Services Annual Reports <http://umanitoba.ca/student/accessibility/annual-reports.html>

## **University Policy and Procedure**

“The University of Manitoba promotes diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in our programs, employment opportunities, and in the conduct of the University’s affairs. We believe in the inherent dignity of all people. We are committed to identifying and removing the barriers that prevent full and meaningful participation in all aspects of campus life. The University will comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal legislation with respect to accessibility and will implement the standards specified under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (“AMA”).”

[The University of Manitoba Accessibility Policy.](#)

“While it is a guiding principle of this procedure that all members of the University community have a role in creating and maintaining an accessible learning environment, the University has designated Student Accessibility Services (“SAS”) to facilitate the implementation of accommodations for Students with documented disabilities.”

[The University of Manitoba Student Accessibility Procedure.](#)

## **Student Accessibility Services (SAS)**

SAS provides support and advocacy for students with disabilities such as: hearing, injury-related, mental health, medical, physical, visual or temporary disabilities. We act as a liaison between students, faculty, staff and service agencies.

SAS upholds the Manitoba Human Rights Code, the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the University of Manitoba's Accessibility Policy.

SAS creates equal access for students with disabilities at the University of Manitoba by:

- Providing supports and programs that recognize our diverse student environment;
- Promoting partnerships between students, staff and faculty;
- Educating the university community about accessibility.

### **Student Accessibility Services Office Locations**

SAS operates out of five areas:

1. SAS Exam Centre - 155 University Centre;
2. Assistive Technology Lab - 335 University Centre;
3. Administrative offices - 520 University Centre;
4. Services for Students at Bannatyne Campus - S211 Bannatyne Campus; and
5. William Norrie Campus (monthly office hours).

Accessibility coordination is also available at the Bannatyne Campus and William Norrie Campus; contact the Student Accessibility Services office for information on scheduling and availability at these two campuses.

### **Admission to the University**

All students, those with and those without a disability must meet the same criteria for admission to the University, and once admitted are assumed to be academically qualified to participate in the educational process of the University.

Admission to some professional faculties and in particular those subject to external accreditation, can be determined in part by Essential Skills and Technical Abilities documents. Skills and abilities criteria describe what learners are expected to do during the program. This includes cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills and abilities. In addition, all Faculty of Graduate Studies programs have bona fide academic requirements that students must meet to complete their programs.

### **Registration with Student Accessibility Services**

Students must meet with an Accessibility Coordinator to determine an individual accommodation plan for their academic program while registered at the University of Manitoba. Follow up appointments are scheduled as necessary to complete funding paperwork, adjust accommodations, and to provide a 'check-in' and support for the student. Accessibility Coordinators provide in-person appointments, drop-in appointments, phone, video, and email support.

Once registered with Student Accessibility Services, students are required to re-activate their registration each term in order to confirm to our office their continuing desire for the accommodations already in place.

All students wishing to register with Student Accessibility Services must have documentation from a registered health professional in order to verify their disability.

## Documentation of Disability

Documentation is in the form of a written statement from a registered health professional such as a student's physician, registered psychologist or psychiatrist. This documentation will be kept on file in Student Accessibility Services in accordance to the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). The UofM requests this information to understand the connection between the barrier described, the student's disability, and the requested accommodation. If documentation is not yet available, students can meet with SAS for a consult/outreach appointment to discuss SAS processes and potential accommodations, however no accommodations can be implemented until documentation is received.

Student Accessibility Services provides a disability assessment form for students to bring to their registered health professional. This form can be found at the following link:

<http://umanitoba.ca/student/accessibility/media/Disability-Assessment-Form.pdf>

Paper copies of this form are available at 520 University Centre.

## Intake Meeting

The goals of the initial meeting are:

- to listen to the student's self-report of their experience of disability, and barriers they are facing;
- to review documentation and accommodation requests; and
- to develop a plan which supports the student and considers academic requirements.

A plan of action is designed to provide an opportunity for the student to participate fully and equally in university life. Typically, the plan includes accommodations for barriers, referrals to other services or departments, financial assistance, and related liaison if needed.

Accommodations can be reviewed any time a student's medical condition, diagnosis, accommodation needs or academic requirements change, or when their documentation of disability expires.

Once the accommodations have been determined, letters of accommodation are created in the SAS scheduler and a notification email is sent to the course instructor(s), with copies being available to the student. The following is a sample letter of accommodation. Please note that this is an example only; accommodation plans are individualized and each student's plan can include a different list of accommodations.

### Sample Letter of Accommodation

"September 9, 2019

To the attention of: Instructor Name

RE: Jon Student                  Student ID#: 55T

The University of Manitoba has designated Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to facilitate the implementation of accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Please be aware that the information in this letter is confidential under the *Personal Health Information Act* (PHIA) and *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA).

The student's accommodations are as follows:



## Classroom Accommodation

- Extensions on assignments - Student would contact their advisor and/or instructor to negotiate extensions, prior to the assignment due date, during the term
- Volunteer Notetaker – Please request a volunteer from the class to share notes. (Instructions below).
- Accessible PDF course material - Course materials will be converted into accessible formats.
- Classroom accessibility

## Exam Accommodation

- SAS space for tests/exams – Students writing with SAS are required to book their tests/exams at least two weeks in advance during Fall/Winter. Summer session requires one week notice.
- Extended Test/Exam Time: 50%
- Computer use for test/exam (no internet access)
- Spell/grammar check
- Student may require deferred tests - Students should contact their advisor and instructor to discuss test deferrals
- Assistive Technology for tests/exams

Instructors are asked to request volunteer note-takers on behalf of SAS for their classes if Volunteer Notetaker is listed as an accommodation above.

Sample Announcement:

“Student Accessibility Services requires volunteer note-takers for this class. If you would like to volunteer, and receive recognition on your Co-Curricular Record (CCR) for your time, please login to JUMP and click on the Student Accessibility Services link on the top left-hand side of the page (in the Quick Links section). Volunteering is now easier than ever, you can upload notes directly to JUMP with the SAS scheduler. Thank you.”

A [PowerPoint slide with this information](#) is available on the SAS website.

If you would like more information about course accessibility or have questions about the information in this letter and would like a full description of the accommodations listed, please find the Student Accessibility Services **Handbook for Faculty and Staff** on our website, <http://umanitoba.ca/student/accessibility/media/SAS-Handbook.pdf>. Also, please contact myself or the Student Accessibility Services office at 204-474-7423 for more information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Accessibility Coordinator  
204-474-7423  
Student\_accessibility@umanitoba.ca”

## **Letter of Accommodation and Questions**

Once students have read the syllabus and any other materials that outline the course objectives and have identified difficulty with an aspect of the learning environment (curricular expectations are part of the environment as well as technology and buildings), they are advised to speak with their instructors and their Accessibility Coordinator. Students are also advised to contact their Accessibility Coordinator when they

have been accepted into a professional program to discuss any practicum or clinical accommodation requests. Accommodation can take time to discuss and implement. Students are aware that this process will not be immediate.

Once the student has registered with Student Accessibility Services and provided consent, a letter of accommodation will be sent to each instructor and Accommodation Team chair in that faculty/school/college. If the instructor has any questions or concerns or disagrees with the accommodations listed by Student Accessibility Services, these should be raised with the Accessibility Coordinator to facilitate the most appropriate resolution. If there is no resolution at this stage, students or academic staff members can appeal under the Student Accessibility Appeal Procedure.

### **Accommodation Teams**

Academic staff members may also consult their Faculty/School/College Accommodation Team chair and/or members for further discussion regarding accommodations. SAS staff will contact the Faculty/School/College Accommodation Team regarding nonstandard accommodation requests and most practicum/clinical accommodation requests.

### **Confidentiality and Release of Information**

When students register with Student Accessibility Services, they will be asked to read the Student Accessibility Services Confidentiality and Consent Form and provide consent, (if applicable), for provision of accommodations. Student Accessibility Services follows the standards set in the FIPPA and PHIA documents, and specific medical information, such as a student's diagnosis, will not be shared with academic staff members or staff outside of Student Accessibility Services unless the situation requires it and the student has provided written consent to do so.

No information, written or verbal, can be released to a third party without the written consent of the student. This applies to academic staff members and office staff of the entire university, not only Student Accessibility Services.

Students' disability information is considered personal health information; it is their information to share or not as they see fit, and the same applies to the use of accommodation for those disabilities. It is not appropriate to reveal the use of accommodation on exams or in other settings to other students, or when providing a reference for a student to either another program or an employer. The student's performance is achieved in a fair and equitable fashion and reflects ability to the same degree any student's performance reflects individual ability.

If you need to discuss disability-related information with a student, please ensure that you do so in a way that ensures that the student's personal or medical information is not revealed to other people. It is often best to meet with the student privately since they are the ultimate expert in understanding their own needs. The student may be able to suggest ideas, which have worked in other courses as well.

### **Programs and Services**

Student Accessibility Services provides a number of programs to support students. These currently include the:

Academic Attendant or Academic Assistant Program  
American Sign Language - English Interpretation  
Assistive Technology Program

Classroom Equipment Program  
Volunteer Notetaking Service  
Transcription Service  
On campus van transportation  
Student Mentor Program

Further information about these programs is available on the Student Accessibility Services website at [umanitoba.ca/student/accessibility/](http://umanitoba.ca/student/accessibility/).

Please note that learning support is available to all students through the Academic Learning Centre ([umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/](http://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/)).

## **Academic Accommodations**

The presence of a disability may require that students carry out academic tasks in a different fashion than we may have come to expect.

Participation as a student often requires sustained sitting or standing, listening and concentrating, fairly continuous handwriting or keyboarding, as well as reading fine print, distant projections or blackboards, and computer screens. Laboratory work poses additional requirements for positioning and dexterity. Library research requires reaching overhead to handle heavy texts, prolonged reading and visual scanning of electronic documents, standing in line to print/photocopy materials, or accessing reserve readings in a limited time period, among other tasks. A structural or functional impairment can affect these or other academic tasks, restricting a student's participation in their curriculum.

### **Fairness in Accommodation**

The question of fairness often arises in providing some students with alternate means of performing academic tasks. As mentioned previously, accommodations are never intended to give an advantage, but to provide an equal opportunity for students who need to perform certain tasks in a different fashion. Students must still meet the essential requirements of the curriculum. They must gain the required knowledge, demonstrate that knowledge to the satisfaction of the instructor and apply that knowledge appropriately.

Accommodation addresses the removal of barriers which are not essential aspects of the learning process. It does not address treatment or remediation of the primary structural or functional impairment. Academic accommodations are intended to facilitate equal participation in the learning environment and the demonstration of knowledge, to enable students to perform the academic requirements of their courses or programs, unobstructed by participation restrictions resulting from the interaction of the person with their environment. At no time should academic accommodation undermine or compromise the bona fide academic requirements that are established by an academic staff member of the University.

### **Individualized Accommodations**

The accommodations discussed below are the ones that are widely accepted by post-secondary institutions in Canada. In situations where standard accommodations do not address barriers, nonstandard accommodations may be put in place following consultation between the student, Student Accessibility Services, the academic staff member, and other appropriate university staff including accommodation teams. Student Accessibility Services staff members are always pleased to work with academic staff members to find a solution.

## *Types of Accommodations*

### Test/Exam Accommodations

These accommodations pertain to the environment, format, and testing method for tests and exams.

### Classroom/Course-Related Accommodations

These accommodations pertain to the physical environment of the classroom, instructional strategies, and alternate formats of the course materials and requirements.

### Practicum/Clinical Accommodations

These accommodations pertain to the practicum or clinical site, course requirements or duties of work.

### Campus Accommodations

These accommodations pertain to physical accessibility of and transportation on the campus.

## **A Welcoming Culture in the Classroom**

It is important to promote a climate which values diversity and includes all members of the university community without discrimination on the basis of disability. That climate is affected by informal violations of the students' right to privacy, such as discussions in labs or other group settings where a student may be exposed to pejorative remarks about "Special Needs students."

A student's dignity is violated when comments of this nature are made, and it undermines the climate for everyone if some members are made to feel unwelcome. In addition, students who are disabled feel ostracized and harassed for needing to do certain tasks in a different way. Discussions with or about students with disabilities should be conducted in private, according them the same respect as a colleague with a medical condition or other private matter requiring individual attention. Please bear this in mind when discussing students and accommodation issues.

## **General Guidelines**

A person with a disability is a person first. For example, an appropriate term would be "student with a disability," not "disabled student."

Your ideal role is to assist the student in finding practical solutions to specific requirements.

At the beginning of term, it would be helpful for you to invite any students who require accommodations to meet privately with you. Some students are self-conscious about their disability, or prefer others not know about it, and may be more willing to seek assistance if they believe you will be receptive. This announcement should be made both aloud and included in the course outline.

Accessible teaching strategies will benefit all students in your class, including students with disabilities.

If you are unsure about how to offer assistance, please contact Student Accessibility Services for support.

Treat a person with a disability as a healthy person. Because an individual has a disability it does not mean that the individual is sick. Many people with disabilities have no accompanying health problems.

Recognize that disabilities vary across a spectrum of severity.

Focus on the student's capabilities and individuality.

Expect disability when planning for your course or program.

## **Syllabus Statement**

As outlined in the Responsibilities of Academic Staff with regard to Students procedure, all academic staff are required to include a statement in course syllabi referring students with disabilities to Student Accessibility Services to facilitate the implementation of accommodations, and a statement communicating willingness to meet with students to discuss the accommodations recommended by Student Accessibility Services.<sup>2</sup>

The following statement may be used:

### **Student Accessibility Services**

If you are a student with a disability, please contact SAS for academic accommodation supports and services such as note-taking, interpreting, assistive technology and exam accommodations. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. mental illness, learning, medical, hearing, injury-related, visual) are invited to contact SAS to arrange a confidential consultation.

*Student Accessibility Services*

<http://umanitoba.ca/student/accessibility/>

520 University Centre

204 474 7423

[Student\\_accessibility@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Student_accessibility@umanitoba.ca)

## **Impact on Learning for Students with Disabilities**

This section explores the different areas of disability and how each may impact a student's learning. Please note that this provides a general idea of what symptoms and barriers are associated with each disability, but that each student is affected by and responds to their disability in different ways. There is also often a range of severity within each disability, resulting in varied needs between students with the same diagnosis.

The information given in this section is not intended to aid you in figuring out a student's diagnosis, but to provide you with a more in-depth understanding of why specific accommodations are applied. If you have any questions about the information presented here, an Accessibility Coordinator will be happy to discuss them with you.

## **Disability Categories**

For the purposes of this handbook, Student Accessibility Services has divided the disability information into the following categories:

Mental Health Disability

Attention Deficit Disorder

Learning Disabilities

Chronic Illnesses

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[http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/media/Responsibilities\\_of\\_Academic\\_Staff\\_re\\_Students\\_ROASS\\_Procedures\\_-\\_2016\\_09\\_01.pdf](http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/media/Responsibilities_of_Academic_Staff_re_Students_ROASS_Procedures_-_2016_09_01.pdf)

Mobility Impairments  
Visually Impaired or Blind  
Acquired Brain Injury  
Deaf or Hard Of Hearing  
Autism Spectrum  
Temporary Disabilities

There can be many differences between individuals within each category of disability. The degree and impact of disability varies from person to person. As well, a person may have more than one disability.

Student Accessibility Services prepares an annual report on accommodation of and services provided for each of the main categories of disabilities. The annual reports are available on the Student Accessibility Services website.

It is important to note that instructors are not provided with a student's diagnosis or specific medical information in order to protect the student's confidentiality as per PHIA and FIPPA regulations.

## **Students with Mental Health Disability**

Psychiatric conditions may result in several symptoms which require accommodation in academics. The most frequently occurring conditions are anxiety disorders (e.g., panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder ) and mood disorders (e.g., depression, bipolar disorders), which are also very common in the general population. It is also possible to see some conditions on campus which are less common in the general population, such as brief psychotic disorder, personality disorder and schizophrenia, as these often have their onset in young adulthood.

Mental health disorders interfere with a student's ability to concentrate at various times. This may be due to primary symptoms of fatigue, limited ability to focus and sustain attention, internal events such as disturbing or obsessive thoughts, or medication side effects.

Productivity is also affected with mental health disorders as the ability to consistently engage in studies and attend class varies with the course of the condition. In some cases, the very nature of the material covered in class may have a profound effect on the student's ability to participate, as certain subjects trigger difficult emotional responses. The work may be very good when the student is able to participate, and careful pacing with flexible deadlines may be required when the condition worsens.

It is important to note that an anxiety disorder in this context is distinctly different from the "anxiety" experienced by most students at exam time. Anxiety disorder may include panic attacks with difficulty breathing, rapid heart rate, sweating, and a profound fear of impending disaster. Students with anxiety disorders may actually lose consciousness in exam settings. It is an ongoing, long-term condition not easily remediated with strategies such as study and exam-writing skills, relaxation techniques, or improved confidence; it is probably being treated with psychotherapy and medication as well as lifestyle management.

Similarly, depression as a primary impairment is distinct from "the blues," situational depression or bereavement and grief reactions. The latter occur in the normal range of human experience, and are more readily addressed with supportive counselling, changes in the situation, the passage of time, or a combination thereof. Clinical depression, on the other hand, can be very persistent, lasting months or

years, affecting the student's appetite, sleep pattern, engagement in activities, concentration and productivity. There is often a biochemical imbalance which requires a combination of medication and therapy before improvement is seen.

An excellent resource regarding students with mental health conditions in post-secondary education is the Canadian Mental Health Association's publication *Your Education*, available online ([www.cmha.ca/youreducation/introduction.html](http://www.cmha.ca/youreducation/introduction.html)). Another excellent book for help in understanding these conditions is *College Students in Distress: A Resource Guide for Faculty, Staff and Campus Community* by Bruce S. Sharkin, available at the U of M Elizabeth Dafoe Library.

### **Instructional Strategies**

Note-takers and taping of lecture material may be helpful in ensuring the student does not miss information when attendance, attention and concentration are affected.

Hard copies of notes, overheads, and handouts are useful in reinforcing ideas covered in class.

Awareness of material that may be emotionally evocative for the student and a sensitive approach, including some explanation of topics to be addressed, may help the student deal more effectively with the information.

### **Communication Strategies**

Privacy and an absence of background noise are helpful in communicating with students with mental health conditions.

Providing information in writing for future reference may help compensate for limited short-term memory and attention.

### **Technological Accommodations**

Students with mental health conditions benefit from using computers and online services from home for research and obtaining notes whenever possible, as this allows for more individualized pacing of work, a less stressful environment, and fewer intrusions from other people, which may be anxiety-inducing.

### **Assignment Accommodations**

Flexibility in deadlines is important in helping students with mental health conditions to do their best work. Awareness in dealing with emotionally sensitive course material is helpful in facilitating the student's successful participation in class and in assignments.

Presentations, classroom participation, and group work tasks may be difficult for students with mental health conditions as they may be very anxious. Where possible, consider alternative methods of evaluation (e.g. allow the student to present to a small group or to an individual assessor, submit alternate work in lieu of group work or participation).

### **Examination Accommodations**

Extra time on exams and tests allows students with mental health conditions to compensate for time lost to intrusive thoughts, lack of focus, slowed mental processing or medication side effects.

Separate space for writing exams, either privately or semi-privately, is helpful in reducing the stress of the exam environment and reducing the potential for reaction to being in a highly controlled setting with many other people, which is aversive to many students with these conditions.

Computers may help students organize and re-organize work more efficiently when thought processes are disrupted frequently in an exam period.

For assistance on how to incorporate the above strategies into your course and/or to receive assistance

with applying universal instructional design techniques in the classroom, please contact The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) at: [http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic\\_support/catl/](http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/catl/)

## **Students with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)**

It is estimated that “approximately 3-5 per cent of the Canadian population suffers from ADHD/ADD.”<sup>3</sup> It was previously thought that ADD was a disorder of childhood only, but recent research indicates that some children do not outgrow their difficulties with inattentiveness, hyperactivity and/or impulsivity. While ADD is a heterogeneous disorder, with each individual having a particular blend of symptoms, research indicates that neurological dysfunction, and probably biochemical imbalance, underlie problems maintaining attention, controlling restlessness and acting with sufficient forethought. An ADD diagnosis requires a psychologist or physician to determine that some common challenges are:

- extreme in frequency and impact compared to normal fluctuations in attention, activity level and impulsivity;
- produce clinically significant impairment in more than one life area;
- evident and linked to poor functioning in early childhood;
- NOT attributable to a primary emotional or psychological problem (although coexisting anxiety or depression is not uncommon);
- NOT attributable to problems with motivation or substance abuse.

Many students with ADD find that their problems with inattention, restlessness and disorganization are helped by medication. Counselling to improve self-management strategies and study skills is also often useful, as is therapy aimed at reducing co-existing depression.

## **Instructional Strategies**

Using some instructional strategies for course preparation, presentation of lectures, developing assignments and exams will not only help the students with ADD in your classes to succeed, but will be useful to all your students. Generally, instructional strategies should provide concrete structure and organization. Furthermore, although the instructor is not obliged to "entertain" the students, any efforts to provide variety and novelty in teaching methods will be helpful in maintaining attention to the material. As is true for students who have a learning disability, it is recommended that instructors:

- select well-organized texts with aids such as chapter summaries, glossaries, indexes;
- make book lists and other materials available well in advance;
- provide a role model for organization: present overall plans for the course, unit and lecture;
- use the "tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, tell them what you told them" approach;
- indicate main points before viewing videos or films;
- clearly indicate the main points of your lecture, using written and oral techniques to emphasize them;
- emphasize the relationships between ideas, using visual as well as verbal methods (e.g. concept maps, diagrams);
- use overhead projections, diagrams and charts whenever possible to supplement your oral presentation of information;

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<sup>3</sup> Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba, "FAQs," Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba, 5 March 2014 <[ldamanitoba.org/about-learning-disabilities/faqs/](http://damanitoba.org/about-learning-disabilities/faqs/)>.



- explain assignments clearly, both orally and in writing, with set deadlines;
- modify test questions to avoid double negatives, extremely complex sentence structure, and questions embedded within questions;
- encourage group work when feasible (e.g. brainstorming, assignments).

## **Communication Strategies**

Some students with ADD are reluctant to discuss their disability with their instructor, often because of negative past experiences with teachers, and sometimes based on their own struggles to accept their disability. Disclosing a disability and discussing it can make a student feel nervous, alienated and even ashamed. It is helpful at the beginning of the course to invite any students with disabilities to introduce themselves to you individually during office hours. Then you may find out, in a non-challenging way, as much as the student can tell you about his or her learning style, strengths and weaknesses, and recommended accommodations. It is important to treat these conversations as well as any documentation about students as strictly confidential.

Some students may not yet be aware of having ADD, but you may observe significant problems with attention, "careless" mistakes, extreme restlessness or "fidgetiness", organization and time management. In this case, it may be helpful to privately discuss your observations with the student, suggest available learning support such as tutoring if appropriate, and/or consult with the Accessibility Coordinator about a referral. Finally, it is important to be aware that the student has responsibilities as well, including: to attend classes and to fulfil the essential requirements of the course. While most students with ADD struggle with organizational and time-management skills, it is nonetheless their responsibility to meet the demands of their course load, via support available at Student Accessibility Services, perhaps by reducing their course load, careful course selections and so on. Sometimes, just like their classmates, students with ADD don't meet their responsibilities. It may be useful to consult with the Accessibility Coordinator at this point, but typically, the properly accommodated student should have normal consequences for missing deadlines, handing in poor quality work, etc.

## **Technological Accommodations**

Audio recording of class lectures for students who have difficulty processing auditory information and/or listening and writing at the same time.

## **Assignment Accommodations**

It is helpful to give students written and oral information about their assignments; to be very clear regarding expectations; to provide examples of good and poor quality products; to be willing to discuss the assignments and look over drafts (class size permitting); and to offer choices whenever possible (e.g. oral presentations, essays, group format, etc.). It is typically not helpful for students with ADD to get extensions on their assignments since this usually just pushes forward their "time crunch". Students who are struggling with the work load may do better to take fewer courses at a time, often supplementing these with summer courses.

## **Examination Accommodations**

Typical accommodations include:

- extra time for tests and exams (or frequent breaks)
- writing exams in a smaller room with fewer distractions
- writing exams alone to allow for talking aloud
- access to a computer to allow for spell checking, sequencing written material, legible results
- consideration (no penalty) for spelling or grammar mistakes when a spell checker was not used

- assistive technology to read aloud the test questions and/or to type dictated answers

For assistance on how to incorporate the above strategies into your course and/or to receive assistance with applying universal instructional design techniques in the classroom, please contact The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) at: [http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic\\_support/catl/](http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/catl/)

## **Students with Learning Disabilities**

It is estimated that learning disabilities occur in 10% of the general population. Due to early recognition and support in the school system, more students with learning disabilities are successful in gaining admission to post-secondary institutions. This creates a challenge for instructors since learning disabilities are diverse and, at times, difficult to understand.

It helps to know what a learning disability is, and what it is not. Individuals with learning disabilities have problems processing certain types of information, such as visual or auditory, due to a known or assumed permanent neurological deficit. The difficulties taking in, retaining and/or expressing information are NOT due to: low intelligence, poor educational background, poor motivation, emotional problems, or vision or hearing impairments. For a diagnosis of a specific learning disability to be made, a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual capacity must be seen, with deficits in one or more of the following:

receptive language (reading, listening),  
 language processing (conceptualizing, integrating),  
 expressive language (writing, spelling, talking),  
 mathematical computations and reasoning.

It is important to recognize that students with learning disabilities are not of low intelligence or overall cognitive ability, but struggle to process certain types of information as accurately and efficiently as their peers. Given appropriate accommodations, the impact of a student's processing impairments may be reduced, and a more valid measure of his or her knowledge and ability can be obtained. For example, a student with a learning disability who reads extremely slowly will need extra time for readings and examinations.

## **Diagnosis and Testing Process**

Learning disabilities are diagnosed based on standardized test results by a registered psychologist. Thorough testing and empirically based criteria identify information processing deficits that may be impeding a student's ability to perform at a level commensurate with general intellectual functioning. Students at the University of Manitoba who self-identify as having a learning disability must submit a recent and comprehensive psycho-educational assessment report documenting their diagnosis. Additional assessment may be required for inadequate or incomplete documentation.

Due to the demand for assessment, there may be some delay in getting confirmation of a learning disability, and this can result in diagnoses and recommendations for accommodations not being made until late in the academic year or even postponed until a subsequent academic year. Once a student has been referred for assessment, they are scheduled for an intake interview that explores a range of background factors, including previous diagnosis/testing, academic functioning (reading, writing, speaking, listening, math, memory, other), organization and time management, laterality, spatial skills, attention and concentration, hyperactivity and impulsivity, school history, medical and developmental history, personal

and social information, and family information, among other factors.

If the interview suggests that the student has a long-standing pattern of markedly uneven abilities likely due to information-processing problems (rather than low ability, inadequate education, psychological problems, sensory impairments), then he or she completes seven hours of standardized psychometric tests which measure:

Intelligence (Verbal-conceptual, Perceptual-organizational, Sequential symbolic-numerical)

Motor Speed

Processing Speed (Sequential information, Spatial information)

Memory Skills (Verbal, Visual, Attention and concentration, Long-term)

Attention and concentration

Personality and emotional factors

Arithmetic (Written, Mental)

Reading (Decoding, Speed, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Word Discrimination)

Writing (Basic Skills, Expression, Speed, Handwriting)

Spelling

If assessment results indicate the presence of a specific learning disability, recommendations for appropriate accommodations are made in order to address identified areas of weakness. For example, the amount of extra time needed is based on results of normed tests of processing speed, writing speed, and reading speed. Many students also receive recommendations for learning support counselling, remediation work and/or counselling to reduce the impact of contributing emotional factors. Although the underlying information-processing problem in a learning disability is permanent (neurologically based), most students benefit from guidance on how to use their cognitive strengths to help offset their weaknesses; applying a range of compensatory and/or learning strategies. Students with learning disabilities can work with the Academic Learning Centre to develop and strengthen techniques that allow them to perform more effectively at university. For some students with learning disabilities, accessing reading materials (books, articles, etc.) in electronic format for use with text to speech software is quite beneficial.

## **Instructional Strategies**

Using the following instructional strategies for course preparation, presentation of lectures, preparing assignments and exams will not only help the students with learning disabilities in your classes succeed, but will be useful to all of your students:

- select well-organized texts with aids such as chapter summaries, glossaries, indexes
- make book lists, assignments and other materials available well in advance
- be a role model for organization: present overall plans for the course, unit and lecture
- preview the material to be covered, provide the information, and then review the most salient points
- indicate main points before viewing videos or films
- clearly indicate the main points of your lecture, using written and oral techniques to emphasize them
- emphasize the relationships between ideas, using visual as well as verbal methods (e.g. concept maps, diagrams)
- use visual images, diagrams, and charts whenever possible to supplement your oral presentation of information (lecture)
- explain assignments clearly, both orally and in writing, with set deadlines and criteria for evaluation

- modify test questions to avoid double negatives, extremely complex sentence structure, and questions embedded within questions
- encourage group work when feasible (e.g. brainstorming, assignments)
- do not pressure students to read aloud

## **Communication Strategies**

Some students with learning disabilities are reluctant to discuss their disability with their instructor. This is often due to negative past experiences with teachers, or the result of their own struggles to accept their disability. Disclosing a disability and discussing it can make a student feel nervous, alienated and even ashamed. It is helpful at the beginning of the course to invite any students with disabilities to introduce themselves to you individually during office hours, but do not pressure students to do so. Then you may find out what student can tell you about his or her learning style, strengths and weaknesses, and recommended accommodations. It is important to treat these conversations as well as any documentation about students as strictly confidential. The decision to disclose rests with the student, not the instructor, however well intentioned.

Some students may not be aware of having a learning disability, but you may observe a significant discrepancy between their apparent understanding of material and their ability to express that knowledge on tests or assignments, or their ability to learn from readings versus lectures, labs, etc. In this case, it may be helpful to privately discuss your observations with the student, suggest available learning supports such as tutoring if appropriate, and/or consult with the Student Accessibility Services for a referral.

While some students with learning disabilities struggle with organizational and time management skills, it is nonetheless their responsibility to meet the demands of their course load, via learning support available at Student Accessibility Services and the Academic Learning Centre. Sometimes, just like their non-disabled classmates, students with learning disabilities don't fulfil their responsibilities. It may be useful to consult with the Accessibility Coordinator at this point; however, the properly accommodated student should have normal consequences for missing deadlines, handing in poor quality work, etc.

## **Technological Accommodations**

Audio recording of class lectures assists students who have difficulty processing auditory information and/or listening and writing at the same time. The use of a computer for completing in-class written assignments is beneficial for students who have difficulty with handwriting, spelling, and organization. Permit the use of spelling aids or calculators for students who understand the concepts, but struggle with sequential processing and rote memory.

## **Assignment Accommodations**

It is helpful to give students written and oral information about their assignments, to be very clear regarding expectations, to provide examples of good and poor quality products, to be willing to discuss the assignments and look over drafts (class size permitting), and to offer choices whenever possible (e.g. oral presentations, essays, group format, etc.). Students who chronically struggle with the workload may do better to take fewer courses at a time, or extend their degree program over an additional year or two.

## **Examination Accommodations**

A number of exam accommodations are typically recommended for students with learning disabilities. These recommendations are based on psychometric findings, demonstrating, for example, slow processing, reading and/or writing speed. It is the responsibility of each department and/or academic staff member to

determine the essential requirements of a course and consult with Student Accessibility Services whether the recommended accommodations affect these requirements.

Typical accommodations include:

- Extended time for tests and exams
- Writing exams in a smaller room with fewer distractions
- Access to a computer to allow for spell checking, sequencing written material, and production of legible results
- Consideration (no penalty) for spelling or grammar mistakes when a spell-checker was not used
- Assistive technology to read aloud the test questions and/or to type dictated answers

An additional resource available for download is *Creating Opportunities for Successful Learning: A Handbook for Faculty on Learning Disability* found at [uoguelph.ca/tss/resources/pdfs/lophandbook.pdf](http://uoguelph.ca/tss/resources/pdfs/lophandbook.pdf)

For assistance on how to incorporate the above strategies into your course and/or to receive assistance with applying universal instructional design techniques in the classroom, please contact The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) at: [http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic\\_support/catl/](http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/catl/)

## **Students with Chronic Illnesses**

Chronic illness may include conditions such as Crohn's disease, diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome, HIV, cancer, lupus, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, or other long-term illnesses. Such conditions are often worsened by stress and require careful pacing of a student's workload to minimize the possibility of an exacerbation of the disease. In some cases, a period of exacerbation results in permanent damage. Chronic illnesses share several symptoms which require accommodation in an academic setting:

- Fatigue and limited physical endurance, due to the drain of energy on the person's body or the presence of chronic pain
- Fluctuating capacity to participate in daily activities due to exacerbations and remissions of the disease itself
- Difficulty concentrating due to medication side effects, pain, and emotional factors
- Difficulty with mobility due to inflammation of joints, limited nerve function, or decreased strength
- Periods of diminished productivity through the day, in the morning while waiting for medication to take effect, or late in the day after several hours of pain

- Frequent absence from class due to all of the above

Chronic illness is particularly frustrating when students feel well enough to attempt their studies much of the time, and then meet with limitations when their illness coincides with time needed for preparing assignments, deadlines or exams. The students are able to continue on a limited basis or resume their studies, so a withdrawal is not necessary, but some flexibility is appropriate.

### **Instructional Strategies**

Students with chronic illness often require note-takers to ensure that they have a complete set of notes to study from despite absence or difficulty copying all lecture material.

Providing students with electronic or paper copies of notes or slides, handouts, references, etc. is very useful as students try to keep up with course material.

### **Communication Strategies**

Students with chronic illness are often tired and physically uncomfortable, so conversations may be more effective in a private setting, with less ambient noise, while also providing a confidential environment. This may increase students' comfort, help them relax, and facilitate better communication.

### **Technological Accommodations**

The use of computers is helpful to students with chronic illness, since it allows them to produce written work with as little physical exertion as possible and permits energy-saving shortcuts to editing and on-screen enlargement. Completing assignments at home using a computer with access to library or Internet resources facilitates individualized pacing of student work by removing the constraint of working on the same schedule as peers, and reduces the need to come to campus, saving both energy and time.

Audio recording of lectures may help the student to review material presented quickly without taking additional time in class.

### **Assignment Accommodations**

Flexibility with deadlines is often necessary when symptoms flare and students are unable to work on assignments. Many students diligently work ahead on assignments in order to avoid this, but last minute extension requests may still need to be made due to the unpredictability of some conditions, and the fact that symptoms are often exacerbated by stress.

### **Examination Accommodations**

Extra time on exams or tests to allow for washroom breaks, position changes to alleviate pain and pacing of work to avoid excessive fatigue are often necessary.

Using a computer to write tests limits the amount of physical exertion that is required.

Writing exams or tests in an area separated from the class helps by decreasing the environmental distractions to be screened out, thereby reducing fatigue and allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge effectively. Deferred exams may be required when symptoms increase and student is too unwell to write the exam as scheduled.

For assistance on how to incorporate the above strategies into your course and/or to receive assistance with applying universal instructional design techniques in the classroom, please contact The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) at: [http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic\\_support/catl/](http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/catl/)

## **Students with Mobility Impairments**

Mobility disabilities can be the result of injuries to the spinal cord, arthritis, neurological conditions such as muscular dystrophy or cerebral palsy, or missing limbs. Students may or may not use mobility aids such as wheelchairs, canes, crutches, braces, and prostheses. There may be resultant limitation of speed, strength, endurance, dexterity and/or coordination, particularly fine motor coordination.

Physical barriers to students with mobility impairments exist at almost every post-secondary institution in Canada. For example, students attending the University of Manitoba may have difficulty getting to class due to inclement weather conditions.

### **Instructional Strategies**

Know what parts of your building and classroom can be used by persons using a wheelchair. Be ready to offer assistance if necessary. Bear this in mind when scheduling special events, such as films or lectures in alternate locations.

- Students will need more time to travel between classes and may be late arriving.
- Students may be using the on campus transportation provided by Physical Plant which can be delayed.
- Students may also request a change in lecture or tutorial section due to difficulty with the physical accessibility of the classroom.
- Students may need a place to sit in the front of the classroom in order to avoid stairs. Proximity to an exit is also important for safety reasons.
- If the mobility impairment makes it difficult to take notes, the student may require a note-taker.

### **Communication Strategies**

Assume a position that will allow eye contact with the individual on the same level. Pull up a chair and sit down. Remember that the wheelchair or walker is a part of the personal space of the individual. Do not touch a wheelchair without being asked to do so. Be aware, when possible, of the wheelchair user's capabilities. Some users can walk short distances with assistance. They may use a wheelchair to conserve energy and to move about more quickly.

Be clear and concise when giving directions to a person with a mobility problem. Indicate the distance and any physical barriers that may hinder travel. For instance, a one-inch curb can stop some wheelchairs and two steps without railings can stop an otherwise ambulatory individual.

## **Technological Accommodations**

A variety of technological devices such as alternative keyboards and voice input systems enable persons with disabilities to have better access to and use of information resources needed to complete course requirements.

## **Assignment Accommodations**

Allow for flexibility with deadlines. Many students with physical disabilities contend with issues outside of the classroom such as arrangements for transportation to and from the library, medical care, attendant care for daily living needs, etc. All are very time consuming, so extensions on assignments may be required. Provide advance notice for field placements so that the student can make appropriate travel arrangements. You may need to allow for alternative field assignments if those in place are not physically accessible.

## **Examination Accommodations**

Extra time on exams or tests to accommodate slower writing speed and/or computer use with assistive technology or alternative keyboard may be required.

For assistance on how to incorporate the above strategies into your course and/or to receive assistance with applying universal instructional design techniques in the classroom, please contact The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) at: [http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic\\_support/catl/](http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/catl/)

## **Students who are Blind or have Low Vision**

Not all individuals who are legally blind are completely without sight. In fact, individuals are considered legally blind when visual acuity is 20/200 or less, that is, ten percent of "normal" vision. Approximately ninety percent of those who are legally blind are classified as having low vision. People with low vision differ greatly in what they are able to see. Some are able only to see shadows, some are able to distinguish colors and still others may possess enough visual acuity to be able to read a blackboard or textbook with special glasses or a monocular. Some people retain adequate vision if they read in excellent light and rest their eyes frequently, or, for others, if the print is enlarged. Others may have little difficulty seeing objects at a great distance, but may be unable to see an obstacle immediately in front of them due to a restricted field of vision.

Individuals who are completely blind may have visual memory and its strength depends on the age when vision was lost. They may rely completely on braille text or voice reproduction of written material. If you are uncertain how much sight individuals have, or how much assistance they may need with a particular task, you should not hesitate to ask them.

## **Instructional Strategies**

Permit the student to sit near the front of the classroom. Some people with low vision benefit from being close to the blackboard. Other students need to record lectures and therefore must be close to the person who is speaking. In both cases, it is important that material written on the blackboard or overhead be read aloud.



If the classroom is in a laboratory setting, a "buddy system" may be most beneficial for the student. This will permit the person to obtain the required information and still work within a safe environment. The U of M strives to be as inclusive as possible; however there are safety concerns in some laboratory settings where students cannot be accommodated. Please contact the office if you have a concern in your lab.

Provide a verbal explanation for visual aids (e.g., graphs, charts, diagrams) and verbally emphasize important information.

## **Communication Strategies**

Approach the individual so that you are facing them, identify yourself, and ask if you can be of assistance. However, do not proceed unless the individual says you can. If you are not sure of exactly what to do, ask the person to explain how you should proceed.

Make sure that your attitude can be heard in your voice. Put your smile, welcome, and helpfulness in your voice.

When you are leaving the room, say so.

Speak to the individual as you would to any other person. Find out what they want in obtaining a useable format.

Speak to the person directly, not through their companion.

If the individual asks to be guided to a particular area, stand next to them, slightly ahead and ask them to take your arm. Do not grab the arm of the person who is blind. This is dangerous and can be frightening. Identify any objects as you encounter them, including steps and curbs.

When giving directions to a person who is blind, be as clear and specific as possible. Describe the surroundings and make sure to point out obstacles in the direct path of travel. Be careful of using descriptions containing numbers or feet or yards/meters (for example, fifty feet ahead). If you are unsure of how to direct someone who is blind, simply ask the person how you should describe things.

When guiding a person who is blind to a chair, guide their hand to the back of the chair and tell the person if the chair has arms.

Be aware of a service animal and the fact that space will need to be made available for the animal in corridors, aisles, etc. Do not touch or pet a service animal, even if it begs for attention. Service animals are not pets; when in the harness, the animal is working. The service animal is responsible for the safety of its owner. Interference could lead to unnecessary disaster.

Do not assume that the individual knows their way around the building/classroom.

Feel free to use words like "look", "see", or "read"; people who are blind use these words too.

## **Technological Accommodations**

If the student uses adaptive equipment which permits them to read printed materials or to work on a computer, you may find it helpful to understand its operation. This, of course, is not essential; however, feel free to ask the student to explain the operation of the equipment to you. Upon request, the Assistive Technologist at Student Accessibility Services would be pleased to demonstrate the equipment available.

## **Assignment Accommodations**

Provide the student with ample notice when assigning research papers. The student may require assistance finding and translating material into alternate format, such as large print, Braille or electronic format, as well as proofreading the final product.

Class assignments or instructions should be read aloud.

For assistance on how to incorporate the above strategies into your course and/or to receive assistance with applying universal instructional design techniques in the classroom, please contact The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) at: [http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic\\_support/catl/](http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/catl/)

## **Students with Acquired or Traumatic Brain Injury**

Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI) are the result of damage to the brain from internal causes. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) can be the result of a blow to the head or of the head being rapidly moved or shaken, often resulting in lost consciousness. Not all injuries to the head will result in a brain injury, and some seemingly minor injuries can cause brain injury. Both ABI and TBI cause damage to brain tissue, and any associated brain swelling or bleeding can increase and complicate the initial damage.

The effects of ABI and TBI can vary greatly depending on the severity of the damage to the brain and the areas of the brain that are impacted. Some effects will be permanent, while many can improve over time.

There are many cognitive, physical, psycho-social, behavioral and emotional effects of ABI and TBI. Each student's experience will differ in terms of the combination of symptoms, the severity of the symptoms, and the extent of their recovery.

Common symptoms following ABI and TBI are:

Difficulty with short- and/or long- term memory

Fatigue

Decreased concentration and attention

Lack of initiative and motivation

Irritability and increased sensitivity to stress

Inappropriate behavior and poor social skills

Decreased response speed

Difficulty with problem solving, planning and sequencing

Depression, anxiety and low self-esteem

Impulsivity

Loss of taste and smell

Dizziness and difficulty with balance

Epilepsy and seizures

Headaches

Decreased or altered vision

Chronic pain

Paralysis

Difficulty with reading and writing (information processing or the physical act of reading and writing)

More in-depth information about ABI and TBI can be found on the Manitoba Brain Injury Association website at [www.mbia.ca](http://www.mbia.ca).

Students with brain injuries can experience many barriers to their academic success, especially when they are still learning what their symptoms are and how to manage them. It is important to note that having a brain injury does not necessarily impact a student's academic potential, although it may cause them to have difficulty processing academic information and expressing their knowledge. Each individual will require a unique set of accommodations, and it may take time and multiple changes or additions to the list of accommodations for the student and Accessibility Coordinator to devise the right combination of accommodations and supports that will lead to their success.

### **Instructional Strategies**

Using the following instructional strategies for course preparation, presentation of lectures, preparing assignments and exams will not only help the students with brain injuries in your classes succeed, but will be useful to all your students.

- select well-organized texts with aids such as chapter summaries, glossaries, indexes
- make book lists, assignments and other materials available well in advance
- provide a role model for organization: present overall plans for the course, unit and lecture
- preview the material to be covered, provide the information, and then review the most salient points
- indicate main points before viewing videos or films
- clearly indicate the main points of your lecture, using written and oral techniques to emphasize them
- emphasize the relationships between ideas, using visual as well as verbal methods (e.g. concept maps, diagrams)
- use visual images, diagrams and charts whenever possible to supplement your oral presentation of information (lecture)
- explain assignments clearly, both orally and in writing, with set deadlines and criteria for grading/evaluation
- modify test questions to avoid double negatives, extremely complex sentence structure, and questions embedded within questions

### **Communication Strategies**

Some students with ABI or TBI may be reluctant to discuss their disability or its effects due because they are concerned with the stigma associated with it (and may have had negative experiences while disclosing in the past). It is helpful at the beginning of each term to invite all students with disabilities to introduce themselves to you during your office hours. Privacy and an assurance of confidentiality are helpful in creating a non-threatening environment to encourage open communication with students with brain injuries.

While some students with ABI and TBI struggle with organizational, sequencing and time management skills, it is nonetheless their responsibility to meet the demands of their course load, via learning support available at Student Accessibility Services; possibly a reduced course load, careful course selections, coaching, and so on. Sometimes, just like their non-disabled classmates, students with ABI and TBI don't fulfil their responsibilities. It may be useful to consult with the Accessibility Coordinator at this point; however, the properly accommodated student should have normal consequences for missing deadlines, handing in poor quality work, etc.

Providing information in writing for future reference may help compensate for limited short-term memory and attention.

### **Technological Accommodations**

Audio recording of class lectures can help students who have difficulty processing auditory information and/or listening and writing at the same time.

Students with ABI or TBI benefit from using computers and online services from home for research and obtaining notes whenever possible, as this allows for more individualized pacing of work, a less stressful environment, and fewer interruptions.

### **Assignment Accommodations**

Flexibility in deadlines is important in helping students with ABI and TBI to do their best work.

Alternatives to group work may be helpful to allow a student with ABI/TBI to work at their own pace, and to avoid interpersonal conflicts if the student has difficulty with social skills.

### **Examination Accommodations**

Extended time for exams and tests allows students with brain injuries to compensate for time lost to difficulty with information retrieval, lack of focus, or slowed mental processing.

Separate space for writing exams is helpful in reducing external distractions and the stress of the exam environment.

Supervised breaks during exams allow students to alleviate mental fatigue and 're-set' their concentration

Only one exam in a 24- or 48- hour period. This can be helpful to help students who have difficulty with memory and information retrieval as it allows the student to focus their studying on one subject at a time. It can also be helpful in avoiding the extreme mental fatigue that can be caused by intense periods of studying and the increased amount of time the student uses to write their exams.

Computers may help students organize and re-organize work more efficiently when thought processes are disrupted frequently in an exam period and when information processing is difficult. Assistive software may be helpful in reading questions aloud to students and organizing thoughts for long-answer or essay-style exams.

For assistance on how to incorporate the above strategies into your course and/or to receive assistance with applying universal instructional design techniques in the classroom, please contact The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) at: [http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic\\_support/catl/](http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/catl/)

### **Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

Hearing loss may range from a mild to a profound. For example, a "hearing impairment" may extend from a mild hearing loss in one ear to complete deafness. An individual may be unable to hear certain pitches, environmental sounds or everyday speech. In fact, by some estimates, hearing loss is the most prevalent chronic health problem in this country, affecting 1.5 million Canadians.

Hearing impairments can have dramatic ramifications on communication. For those born with profound deafness, language development may not reflect intelligence or knowledge, as each word must be

taught separately, along with its meaning. Communication by the Deaf occurs through American Sign Language (ASL), Signed English, lip-reading, speech, and/or writing. Lip reading can only convey 30-50% of spoken information. The most commonly used method of communication among the Deaf is ASL, a language unto itself, with its own grammatical structures, and is the basis on which a very strong Deaf culture is predicated. Members of this culture do not consider themselves to be disabled by their deafness and use of ASL. Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing may use ASL or spoken English, or both. Do not make assumptions.

### **Instructional Strategies**

Many students who are hard of hearing rely on lip-reading. Students who read lips will seat themselves in the best position in order to watch as you speak. Please do not speak with your back to the class. Avoid pacing around the room as it is difficult to lip-read a moving target. Speak in a normal (and not exaggerated) manner; use of short and simple sentences is best.

Use visual aids whenever possible. A written outline on the board or on a PowerPoint slide may be helpful and will help the student focus on the topic of the discussion. People who are hard of hearing need to know what topic is to be discussed in order to identify cue words which help them follow the conversation more clearly.

It may be necessary to repeat answers or discussion given by other students in the class for students who have hearing impairments, particularly if the speaker does not speak clearly or is seated in another part of the room.

Write important announcements and instructions on the blackboard.

Encourage the student to request repetition if he or she has missed something or to clarify with you after class.

If videos or other media are used, turn on closed captioning and provide a summary of the key points. If closed captioning is not available, please contact SAS in advance and a transcript of the video can be created.

Some students may do well in a quiet room but encounter difficulties with background noise when a fan or air conditioning is on. A particular room may be appropriate as a learning environment in one season but not in another.

If the classroom is in a laboratory setting, a "buddy system" may be most beneficial for the student. This will permit the person to obtain the required information and still work within a safe environment. Lab instructors should write down all instructions, especially about lab safety, and clearly label instruments, machines and chemicals.

### **Communication Strategies**

Face the individual when you speak to them, even when others are present. If an interpreter or transcriptionist is present, look and speak to the person who is Deaf or hard of hearing and not at the interpreter or transcriptionist. Approach the individual so that he or she can see you. Ask if you can be of assistance. Since there are varying degrees of hearing impairment, please ask the student to tell you what their needs are.

Many students who are Deaf or hard of hearing will use either ASL interpreters or transcriptionists in the classroom to facilitate communication. Both services typically require 2 staff who will take turns

interpreting/transcribing throughout the lecture in order to avoid hand/wrist strain. Transcriptionists type a verbatim transcript of everything that is spoken aloud in the classroom in real time. They typically sit at the front of the room and the student may be seated next to them, or elsewhere in the classroom if they are viewing the transcript on their laptop screen via internet connection. ASL interpreters typically stand at the front of the room and the student will be seated to ensure a clear sight line. Interpreters will contact instructors prior to the beginning of the term to request access to the course on UMLearn in order to access course materials and PowerPoint slides in order to prepare for upcoming lectures. Interpreters and transcriptionists are impartial and cannot participate in classroom activities. If the student is not present in class, the interpreters and/or transcriptionists will excuse themselves from the classroom as discreetly as possible.

Since many individuals who are hard of hearing rely on lip-reading and facial expressions, do not speak with your back to the class at any time. Ensure adequate light falls on your face and keep hands, glasses, and other objects away from your mouth when talking. Speak clearly and naturally, though perhaps more slowly than usual. You do not need to shout, exaggerate, or over pronounce words. Pausing slightly after technical terms is helpful.

If the person does not understand you, rephrase your sentences or questions using different words. Use paper and pencil if necessary. Getting the message across is more important than the medium used. Use body language and facial expressions to supplement your communication. Reduce the background noise level, if possible.

Not everyone with a hearing loss uses American Sign Language or is able to read lips. Use open-ended questions which must be answered by more than "yes" or "no". Be patient.

### **Technological Accommodations**

Enable closed captioning on all videos. If the video does not have closed captioning available, SAS can produce a transcript of the video for the student to read as the video is being shown in class. Production of a transcript may take up to two weeks, so for this reason it is beneficial to select videos to be shown in class with as much notice as possible.

Cooperate if you are requested to use an FM amplification system. It uses a wireless microphone system and receiving unit that should not interfere with your lecturing style. Please repeat student questions/comments using the microphone, since the device will likely not be able to pick these up directly.

### **Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Asperger Syndrome has recently been dropped by the DSM-V as its own disorder and is now classified under the broader heading of Autism Spectrum Disorder, (ASD). People with autistic behaviors who have developed language at the normal age may still be diagnosed with AS, but under the broader heading of ASD. Often a child is already in school before AS is diagnosed or sometimes the person may be diagnosed later in their teens or adult years. Cognitive, communication and motor skills are usually assessed and attention is paid the person's history and overall ability to function independently. Related disorders and those with similar symptoms including Tourette's Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Schizophrenia, Depression, ADHD and other learning disabilities must be considered as well. There is a high rate of co-morbidity among people with AS.

Common issues for someone with AS will be mild to severe impairments in social interactions and

understanding, restricted and repetitive activities and interests, and deficits in communication. People with AS tend to struggle with social interactions because of their extreme literal-mindedness. They typically have difficulty inferring meanings from tone or context, facial clues or body language. Putting themselves in someone else's shoes is not an ability most students with AS will have. Loud or disruptive behavior can be difficult to curb because of this. Many students with AS will simply have a difficult time understanding that their actions affect people around them. Often, students with AS have a high level of anxiety, and seek to involve themselves in areas they already know or feel comfortable with.

Many students with AS have difficulty speaking to instructors, participating in group work, getting involved in extra-curricular activities, organizing their schedules and maintaining a broad level of interest. They tend to be focused on a few key interests to the detriment of other components of a university degree.

One characteristic of people with AS is a heightened attention to detail that contrasts somewhat with the usual focus on the wider picture. Their restricted focus, coupled with a good rote memory, may result in their having a thorough, detailed knowledge base related to their main interest. When this interest is linked with a viable career choice, such as information technology, engineering and sciences (among others), students with AS can excel in academics and careers in related fields.<sup>4</sup>

Summary of difficulties:

Communication difficulties: conversation skills, interpreting non-verbal clues, understanding sarcasm or metaphor, making and maintaining eye-contact

Social difficulties: engaging with and relating to others, understanding humor, preference to be left alone, frustration and impatience with others

Poor organization and time-management

Difficulty prioritizing and focusing on tasks

Difficulty understanding abstract thought

Poor concentration

Difficulty adjusting to change

Response to some subjects: lack of interest/motivation or distress/agitation

## **Instructional Strategies**

Instructional strategies that provide structure and organization are extremely beneficial for students with AS. A clear understanding of course requirements help students maintain focus and direction, as does consistency and routine. While group work is not a strength of students with AS, when it is necessary, keeping these students in the same group repeatedly will help them build trust with classmates and will go a long way in drawing out a positive participation in classroom activities. Assigning group members that are particularly conscientious students that may more easily accept somewhat discordant behavior will also help mitigate and check disruptive situations from happening. Many other strategies are consistent with Universal Design concepts which are helpful for all students but particularly for students with organizational deficits. Some common tips are:

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<sup>4</sup> T. Lockett, and S. Powell, "Students with Autism and Asperger's syndrome," in S. Powell, ed., *Special Teaching in Higher Education* (Sterling, VA: Kogan, 2003) 159-176.

- select well-organized texts with aids such as chapter summaries, glossaries, indexes
- make book lists and other materials available well in advance
- provide a role model for organization: present overall plans for the course, unit and lecture
- use the "tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, tell them what you told them" approach
- indicate main points before viewing videos or films
- clearly indicate the main points of your lecture, using written and oral techniques to emphasize them
- avoid cold-calling in class
- allow breaks during class

### **Communication Strategies**

Most students with AS will not feel comfortable disclosing their disability to their instructors. Be sure to discuss issues arising in the class with students alone and well away from other students. While it is helpful at the beginning of the course for students with disabilities to introduce themselves to you, most with AS will not. Ask students to see you during office hours where issues can be discussed in private. Try to avoid using idioms, metaphors and sarcasm during lectures and in private conversation. It is important to be blunt, direct and to the point; provide direct feedback and set clear boundaries. While most students with AS struggle with organizational and time-management skills, it is nonetheless their responsibility to meet the demands of their course load, via support available at Student Accessibility Services, perhaps by reducing their course load, careful course selections and so on.

### **Technological Accommodations**

Students with AS will often benefit from access to adaptive technology such as screen reading software and voice-recognition software as well as software designed to assist students with organizational components of their degree. The use of laptop computers is also highly beneficial for studying, writing papers and keeping organized.

### **Classroom and Assignment Accommodations**

Students with AS often require consideration for extended time for assignments. Classroom accommodations can be as simple as a seat near the door if breaks are needed. Sometimes the proximity to groups of people, classroom or technology noise, or distraction can warrant breaks from the classroom to relieve anxiety. Occasionally students will monopolize class discussion with repetitive questions related to, or not, the topic at hand. In this case, it is helpful to set clear boundaries on how many questions are acceptable. Reminding students to seek out instructors during office hours to supplement lectures is also strongly recommended.

### **Examination Accommodations**

Typical accommodations include:

- extended time for tests and exams (or frequent breaks)
- writing exams in a smaller room with fewer distractions
- access to a computer to allow for spell checking, sequencing written material, legible results

### **Other Helpful Accommodations and Strategies**

General or peer tutoring, reduced course load, peer or professional note-taking, counseling support, a quiet retreat area, assistance negotiating needs during fieldwork or practicum placements and the



Academic Attendant (AA) Program. The AA program is designed to provide students with assistance on campus, especially in the classroom. AAs will most often accompany students to class and will act as a note taker and intermediary between student and instructor as students with AS may have difficulty speaking to instructors. AAs will also review pertinent information from lectures and assist students in homework scheduling, essay structuring and research. Students with AS will also get assistance from their AAs in behavior matters. The AA is someone on campus that the student can trust and help answer academic and non-academic questions that arise for all students during the school year.

For assistance on how to incorporate the above strategies into your course and/or to receive assistance with applying universal instructional design techniques in the classroom, please contact The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) at: [http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic\\_support/catl/](http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/catl/)

## **Students with Temporary Disabilities**

A temporary disability is any physical impairment, generally as a result of surgery or an injury such as a break or sprain, for which the side effects will not generally persist beyond one year.

Effects can include:

Pain

Difficulty with concentration

Side effects from medication

Decreased mobility

Temporary students may or may not use mobility aids such as wheelchairs, canes, crutches, and braces. There may be resultant limitation of speed, strength, endurance, dexterity and/or coordination, particularly fine motor coordination. If the effects of the injury or surgery persist beyond a year, or if complications cause permanent impairment, the student may then be reclassified as having a permanent disability.

## **Instructional Strategies**

Know what parts of your building and classroom can be used by persons using a wheelchair. Be ready to offer assistance if necessary. Bear this in mind when scheduling special events, such as films or lectures in alternate locations.

Students will need more time to travel between classes and might be late arriving.

Students may be using the on campus transportation provided by Physical Plant which can be delayed.

Students may also request a change in lecture or tutorial section for this same reason.

If the mobility impairment makes it difficult to take notes, the student may require a volunteer notetaker (VNT). Be ready to offer assistance to share lecture notes if necessary.

## **Communication Strategies**

For a student using a wheelchair or who is unable to stand for extended periods of time, assume a position that will allow eye contact with the individual on the same level. Pull up a chair and sit down. Remember that the wheelchair or walker is a part of the personal space of the individual. Do not touch a wheelchair without being asked to do so.

Be aware, when possible, of the person's capabilities. Some users can walk short distances with assistance. They may use a wheelchair to conserve energy and to move about more quickly.

Be clear and concise when giving directions to a person with a mobility problem. Indicate the distance and any physical barriers that may hinder travel. For instance, a one-inch curb can stop some

wheelchairs and two steps without railings can stop an otherwise ambulatory individual. Recognize that students with mobility impairments may require a seat in the front of the classroom, and may require an additional chair to be used for elevating a leg. Proximity to an exit is also important for safety reasons.

### **Technological Accommodations**

A variety of technological devices such as audio recorders and voice input systems will enable persons with temporary disabilities to use and have better access to information resources that are needed to complete course requirements.

### **Assignment Accommodations**

Allow for flexibility with deadlines. Many students with temporary disabilities contend with issues outside of the classroom such as arrangements for transportation to and from the library, medical care, frequent medical appointments, difficulty typing or sitting for extended periods of time, etc. All are very time consuming, so extensions on assignments may be required.

Provide advance notice for field placements so that the student can make appropriate travel arrangements. You may need to allow for alternative field assignments if those in place are not accessible.

### **Examination Accommodations**

- extended time for tests and exams (or frequent breaks)
- writing exams in a smaller room with fewer distractions
- writing exams alone to allow for computer use and even fewer distractions
- access to a computer to allow the student to type rather than write their exams, as well as use assistive technology (ex. Speech-to-text software)

For assistance on how to incorporate the above strategies into your course and/or to receive assistance with applying universal instructional design techniques in the classroom, please contact The Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) at: [http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic\\_support/catl/](http://intranet.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/catl/).

### **Conclusion**

This handbook was a recommendation of the *ad hoc Committee of Senate Executive to Examine Accommodation of Students with Disabilities and Governance Procedures Related to Academic Requirements* (a.k.a. Cooper Commission) and is intended to serve as a resource to academic staff and staff at the University of Manitoba. Student Accessibility Services appreciates the support and guidance that academic staff and administrative staff provide to students and their interest in the services available through the office. SAS hopes that this document will serve as a reference guide for the University of Manitoba and encourage all university members to consider the needs of those who are differently abled. SAS encourages students, academic staff and staff to contact the office with questions at any time.

## **Appendix A: Classroom and Other Academic Accommodations**

The following accommodations are used in the classroom or in regards to course assignments. It is not an exhaustive list, as students' unique needs can require non-standard accommodations.

### *Academic Attendant*

This accommodation offers on-campus and in-class assistance for students struggling with professor-student interaction, group-work and in-class presentations, note-taking, organizational study assistance, lecture reviews, and interaction with university staff.

The largest users of this accommodation are students who may have difficulty in social situations, with social interactions, with concentration, time management and organization, and processing information.

### *Alternate Format*

The post-secondary learning experience is largely dependent on a student's ability to possess and to gather information from academic materials: course textbooks, course packs, lecture notes, research materials and exam papers. For students with a print disability, this means being able to secure the same materials made available to classmates, in an alternate format suited to their learning needs.

Students with print disabilities do not have equal access to printed materials compared to their peers who do not have a print disability. A print disability is defined as a disability that prevents or inhibits the student from reading print. This includes students who are blind or have low vision, students with specific types of learning disabilities, and students with a physical disability that causes them to be unable to hold or manipulate a book.

Students with a print disability may request academic materials (textbooks, reserve readings, class handouts, etc.) in alternate format. Alternate formats include:

Accessible PDF

Audio

Braille

Epub

Large Print

Accessible Microsoft Word

Acquisition of Alternate Format materials:

Requests for textbooks or course materials in alternate formats are processed by the Student Accessibility Services Assistive Technologist, who can be reached at the SAS Assistive Technology Lab at 335 University Centre. Most alternate format production is sent to Media Production Services Unit for production to e-text, audio and braille. However for last minute requests and articles, Student Accessibility Services provides in-house production for students.

PLEASE NOTE:

Because of the substantial time involved in ordering and producing texts in alternate formats, it is essential for students to have access to a list of required course texts and readings as early as possible prior to the start of a course. It is the responsibility of the instructor to provide students with course

outlines and reading lists as soon as possible so that students can make arrangement for material to be transcribed into an alternate format. Reading lists should indicate whether readings are mandatory, preferred or supplementary in order to determine priority of transcription. It is the students' responsibility to provide the Assistive Technologist with course outlines and their Aurora booklist.

### *American Sign Language (ASL) - Signed English Interpretation*

The use of sign interpreters is a highly specialized accommodation for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing and whose first language is American Sign Language.

Professional interpreters are provided by Student Accessibility Services. Consultation on how to work with interpreters in your class is provided by Student Accessibility Services with the letter of accommodation. Because of the work involved, a minimum of two interpreters is usually required for a lecture, for back-up support of terminology as well as relief from the fatigue of continuous interpretation.

Services are provided for students in the classroom, for meetings with instructors or other students, for laboratory and tutorial sessions, and for other academic situations as needed.

#### PLEASE NOTE:

Material for use by interpreters should be prepared well in advance, and must be provided to the interpreters by the professor/instructor several days before the class. This allows the interpreters to become familiar with any specialized terminology, develop signs for which there may be no ASL equivalent, and decide which interpreter will handle each section of material.

### *Assistive/Adaptive Technology*

Available software that Student Accessibility Services offers includes:

Kurzweil 3000 and Read and Write Gold

These programs convert text to speech and have tools to help with research, note taking, and organization skills.

Most often used by students who have difficulty understanding, retaining and processing written information and who more easily process and understand material spoken aloud.

JAWS, Window Eyes and VoiceOver

These are 'screen-reading' programs that convert what a sighted person sees on the computer screen to speech.

Most often used by students with visual disabilities.

Dragon Naturally Speaking and Dragon Dictate

These programs convert speech to text.

Most often used by students with learning or physical disabilities.

Currently, the assistive technology is available for student use in the Exam Centre, the Assistive Technology lab, and in the adaptive technology lab in Elizabeth Dafoe Library. Further information about the software provided can be found on the Student Accessibility Services website.

## *Audio-Recorded Lectures*

Audio-recording lectures allow the student to listen to the lectures again at their own pace. It is the student's responsibility to record the lectures. This accommodation is typically used by students who have difficulty with concentration, memory, information processing, and note taking. Audio recording can also be an effective learning tool for any student who learns better with material spoken aloud.

For courses in which classroom discussions may involve other students' personal information, audio-recording of the lectures will not be allowed. If this is the case in your course, please contact the student's Accessibility Coordinator to discuss other options.

## *Clip-on Microphone for Instructor to Wear*

The student will provide a clip-on microphone for the instructor to wear during lectures and classroom activities. The device streams the audio to the student's hearing device.

## *Closed Captioning for Video*

This accommodation provides an on-screen transcription of what is being said aloud during videos, and is used by Deaf/Hard of Hearing students. If you cannot provide closed captioning for videos, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator so they can look into having videos transcribed.

## *Classroom Accessibility*

Student Accessibility Services strives to ensure that classrooms are physically accessible to all students. When a classroom may create a barrier for students with decreased mobility, Student Accessibility Services will arrange for temporary adjustments to the classroom, advocate for a classroom change, or request that changes or repairs be done. These requests are sent to Physical Plant so they can check for elevator access and function, install accessible doorknobs, request push-button installation, placing accessible tables and chairs, etc. This is most often used by students with decreased mobility or temporary physical disabilities.

## *Classroom Ergonomics*

Height- Adjustable Tables  
Podiums  
Seating Support

For students whose cannot sit for long periods of time, who may need to change position frequently, and/or who find that the regularly provided classroom furniture causes discomfort or pain.

## *Course Notes in Advance, if available*

Having notes in advance (e.g. PowerPoint slides or the instructor's lecture notes) can help with preparation before class, increase comprehension during the lecture, and provide a framework for note taking. This accommodation is typically used for students who have difficulty with attention, information

processing while notetaking, and memory.

### *Deferred Tests*

Student may require deferred tests - Students should contact their advisor and instructor to discuss test deferrals.

On the day of a test, students whose symptoms will prevent them from showing their knowledge on an exam may need to apply for a deferred test/midterm for medically documented reasons associated with their disability. As with all other students requesting deferrals, Student Accessibility Services students are required to provide medical documentation specific to the exam date unless their previously provided medical documentation already supports the occasional need for deferrals. In the case of a final exam, students must apply to their faculty office for a deferral.

This accommodation is most often used by students whose symptoms are triggered by stress, or for whom episodes of illness or exacerbated symptoms are unpredictable.

### *Descriptive Video*

This is an audio description of what is happening on screen at all times. This accommodation is used by Blind/low vision students.

### *Extensions on assignments - Student would contact their advisor and/or instructor to negotiate extensions, prior to the assignment due date, during the term*

All students are required to use organizational and time management skills to complete assignments on time whenever possible. However, extensions are occasionally requested for disability-related reasons. Extensions should be requested in advance of the assignment due date, and may be requested by the student or by the Accessibility Coordinator.

This accommodation is typically used by students experience challenges with concentration, decreased processing, reading or writing speed, or whose symptoms flare up periodically.

### *Missed Classes*

Student may miss classes – Please contact the advisor to discuss attendance policy or in-class participation.

Attendance at lectures can be impacted for some students, and this accommodation may be added to encourage flexibility when students miss occasional classes for disability-related reasons. If concerns related to attendance policies or participation grades arise, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator to discuss. A plan for missed classes should be discussed at the start of term.

This accommodation is typically used by students who have frequent medical appointments or who are experiencing side effects of medication and/or symptoms of fluctuating intensity such as anxiety, depression or pain.

### *Notetaking*

Effective note taking can form a large portion of the method of obtaining information in the university environment. Note taking involves listening actively and observing, processing the information, recording the relevant information in written form and finally, reviewing the information. Each process is essential and if a student with a disability is unable to perform certain components, his or her chances at succeeding in an academic environment will effectively be reduced.

Student volunteers are requested in the students' class to upload their notes. The volunteers upload notes and the student can access notes through JUMP. A sample announcement for requesting a volunteer is available on the student's Letter of Accommodation.

### Note Taking Express

Note Taking Express (NTE) is a program used for students who require assistance taking notes from lectures. This is an app based program that students access on their smartphone. The NTE app is used to audio record lectures, and then the recording is submitted to the vendor for transcription into typed notes. Student Accessibility Services has completed a privacy impact assessment for this service, which ensures that the University's agreement with NTE is compliant with The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Please be aware that the audio recordings are stored on servers outside of Manitoba, and will be subject to the legislation of another Canadian jurisdiction.

All students that use the NTE app have signed the SAS consent form that explicitly states the following:

"I understand that any course notes, audio taping or notes provided by Note Taking Express is for my own personal use. I agree not to copy, share, or redistribute these materials, in any form, to any person. I agree to erase any audio course material at the end of the course."

This accommodation is used by students who require additional notes from classes. Students are required to attend class in order to receive these notes.

### *Practicum/Clinical Accommodations*

Students in practicum/clinical-based programs may require accommodations in the clinical setting. As clinical and practicum settings vary greatly, an individualized accommodation plan will need to be created in order to address the needs of each student. The student's Accessibility Coordinator will discuss accommodation needs with the instructor and bring these forward to the faculty's Accommodation Team.

### *Reserved Seating*

Some students may require reserved seating in the classroom in order to maximize their classroom experience. Students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, or who have difficulty with concentration and distractibility may choose to sit at the front of the class. Some students may place themselves close to an exit because of their anxiety or need of quick access to a washroom. Students with breaks, sprains or mobility aids may need to sit at the end of a row or near an accessible classroom

entrance. Reserved seating signs may also be placed at the accessible tables in the classroom to indicate priority seating for students with physical disabilities.

SAS staff will put up reserved seating signs for students who require a specific seat as well as reserved seating for SAS staff who will be attending class with students with disabilities, including Transcriptionists, Notetakers, or Academic Attendants.

### *Transcriptionists*

Transcriptionists work in a team of two to type a verbatim transcript for students who cannot hear the lecture. Everything that is heard aloud will be captured in real time using a laptop computer to ensure equal access for the Deaf or hard of hearing student. Students view the laptop screen to follow the lecture in real time. Services are provided for students in the classroom, for meetings with instructors or other students, for laboratory and tutorial sessions, and for other academic situations as needed. Students are required to attend class in order to access this accommodation.

This service is available to students who are Deaf or hard of hearing.



## **Appendix B: Test & Examination Accommodations**

Student Accessibility Services schedules and administers the mid-terms and final examinations for students requiring academic accommodation. In order to access test and exam accommodations, students are required to reactivate their file with SAS each term so that Letters of Accommodation are sent to their instructors.

The following is a list of common test and exam accommodations. This is not an exhaustive list, as students may require non-standard accommodations based on unique needs.

### *Student Accessibility Services Space for Tests/Exams*

Students with this accommodation have the option to book all quizzes, tests, and exams to be written in the SAS Exam Centre or SAS booked locations. Students are responsible for booking all tests and exams using the SAS portal on JUMP at least two weeks in advance during the fall/winter term, and one week in advance during the summer term.

All students using exam-related accommodations are provided Student Accessibility Services space to write, as this avoids singling out the student receiving accommodations and therefore infringing on the student's right to confidentiality.

SAS uses three different types of space for tests/exams, including group, semi-private, and assistive technology space.

Group space indicates the need to write separately from the class. This does not mean the student needs to write alone.

The use of semi-private space means the student can use a quiet space in which they are not alone, but needs to be at least as quiet as a standard exam setting; without the noise from the hall, adjacent offices, or public areas interfering with the student's concentration. The management of external distraction is important for some students using this type of space.

A recommendation for assistive technology space means that the student needs to write alone. It is to be used by students who use assistive technology like speech to text software to write exams. This avoids creating distractions for other students through speaking aloud during the exam.

Decreasing distraction also helps students for whom concentration is difficult due to symptoms or the side-effects of medication. This includes students with ADHD, chronic pain and anxiety. The level of impact of distraction on each student is considered in determining the appropriate type of space to be provided.

### *Alternate Formats & Assistive Technology for Tests and Exams*

Students may require that exams be provided in alternate formats. The Student Accessibility Services Assistive Technologist arranges for test material to be provided in alternate format, and will require the test material in an electronic version (Word or Accessible/Searchable PDF) well in advance to ensure that

the alternate format test is ready for the scheduled test date.

### *ASL-English Interpreter for communication during tests/exams*

Students may require an ASL or Signed English interpreter to be available to them during tests/exams in order to communicate with invigilators and/or to communicate questions about the test with the instructor. Interpreters cannot reword or rephrase the question due to language difficulties.

### *Breaks*

The student's total exam time will be extended by 15 minutes for breaks. The student's exam time is not paused when a break is taken, and students are responsible for managing this time. Breaks may be used for tasks such as refocusing attention, managing symptoms, stretching, or visiting the washroom. Students may either remain in the exam room during a break or within the SAS Exam Centre under the supervision of SAS staff, and will not have access to communication devices.

This accommodation may be used by students with ADHD or physical disabilities to avoid mental or physical fatigue. It may also be used by students who experience panic attacks in order to engage in symptom management techniques without losing exam time. As well, students with medical conditions or anxiety that causes increased use of washroom facilities may use this accommodation so that the time required to travel to and use the facilities does not interfere with their ability to complete the exam.

### *Computer Use for Test/Exam (no internet access)*

This accommodation allows the student access to Word Pad software for composing exam responses. It is also used for any students requiring assistive software for tests and exams. Please see Alternate Format Tests and Exams for a list of formats that may be used.

The Student Accessibility Services Exam Centre provides computers for tests and exams scheduled with Student Accessibility Services. Access to the internet is not available through these computers, and functions such as spelling and grammar checkers are inactivated (unless the student also has the use of spelling/grammar check as an accommodation).

The use of a computer can compensate for decreased manual dexterity by employing different muscles than those used in handwriting, distributing the work of writing to both hands, providing opportunity for adaptive positioning, and producing a consistently legible copy. Students are able to concentrate on content instead of the appearance of the document, without the pain or fatigue of hand muscles affected by impairment. Manual dexterity is affected by various conditions, including arthritis, learning disabilities, injuries or illnesses that compromise muscle performance.

Computers are sometimes used for enlarging print during the writing and reading process, or for using voice output and/or refreshable Braille to edit what they have written. Students with visual impairments require the use of a computer for these reasons.

Computers are also used to compensate for difficulty with attention to detail, which may be affected by medication side effects, cognitive processing speed, attention deficit disorder, or chronic pain.

## *Environmental and Ergonomic Accommodations*

Student Accessibility Services has many options for students needing environmental and ergonomic adaptations to the test/exam environment. These can include (but are not limited to):

Height-adjustable table

Adjustable/Ergonomic chair

Footrest

Podium

Lighting

Couch

Access to a washroom

## *Extended Time for Tests/Exams*

Extended time is used based on the specific needs of each student, and based on percentage recommendations indicated in the student's medical documentation. It may be 25%, 50%, 75%, or up to a maximum of 100% extended (or double) time. This percentage of extended time may be applied to quizzes, in-class tests, mid-term and final exams.

Students who need this type of accommodation are often distracted from concentrating on course material by the constant presence of pain, side effects of pain medications, and the procedures required to relieve or prevent accumulated effects of pain. Students with learning disabilities can use extra time to compensate for extremely slow reading speed (despite average or better comprehension), for profound difficulty with coordination of handwriting, and to implement compensatory strategies in organizing and writing down their ideas. (See section on Students with Learning Disabilities.)

Extended time can allow students with ADHD who struggle with distractibility and difficulty concentrating to take breaks and use other time-and organization-management strategies to complete their exams. This accommodation can also allow students to employ anxiety management techniques, such as deep breathing or stretching. Students may not always require the extra time allotted for their examinations.

Limited endurance due to chronic pain from surgery, traumatic brain injury, neurological or rheumatoid conditions can also require the use of extended time so that a student may change position frequently or rest the affected body parts.

## *One Test/Exam per Day*

Students may only be able to write one test per 24-hour period. Arrangement of deferrals or writing early must be requested through the instructor/faculty. This accommodation is typically assigned to students who struggle with mental or physical fatigue and decreased concentration.

## *Spell/Grammar Check*

Spelling/grammar checkers found in word processing software are enabled for the student. This accommodation is typically used by students for whom spelling and grammar are impacted by difficulty concentrating, or difficulty with sequential processing and rote memory.

## Appendix C: Instructional Strategies for Students

### Universal Instructional Design<sup>5</sup>

**UNIVERSAL:** The premise within UID is that a course designed to accommodate diverse learners will lead to greater success for all students, including those with disabilities.

**INSTRUCTIONAL:** While serving the needs of individual students, a UID course maintains academic rigor even while offering options and alternatives for delivery of the curriculum.

**DESIGN:** A methodical approach to course design and delivery, UID integrates all parts of the curriculum. As the very word “design” implies, is a planned, purposeful, deliberate approach to optimizing all of the resources to serve the students and instructors alike.

### *SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN*

Instructional materials and activities should...

**Be accessible and fair.**

Examples: Multi-modal presentation of course material (visuals, audios, text, discussion, hands-on experience, etc.); invitation to meet with students individually to review their specific needs; online course website with accessible material and asynchronous communication; use of additional learning aids.

**Provide flexibility in use, participation and presentation.**

Examples: Develop alternative teaching strategies directed at students’ interests and needs; group work to foster peer-to-peer learning; variety of learning resources with different formats and interactivity; online exercises/quizzes.

**Be straightforward and consistent.**

Examples: Course materials are presented as clearly and directly as possible; course tools are designed to be straightforward and understandable; concept maps for complex topics; prompt and effective feedback.

**Be explicitly presented and readily perceived.**

Examples: Verbal descriptions of images, objects or procedures; when speaking, face the class and use a well-modulated voice; choice of file formats on course website; use information summaries for repetition and reinforcement.

**Provide a supportive learning environment.**

Examples: Collaborative learning; drafts of assignments; regular availability to students; connect students with supportive resources.

**Minimize unnecessary physical effort or requirements.**

Examples: Course material provided in segments to avoid attention ‘burn out’; in laboratories, students work in pairs; minimize clicking and scrolling for information on course website; use of adaptive technology.

**Ensure a learning space that accommodates both students and instructional methods.**

Examples: Course website has enough ‘white space’ for easy navigation; large and small group activities; arrangement of tools and equipment for use by all students; provide space for use of assistive devices.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.queensu.ca/hc/ds/instructors/handbook/strategies/uid.html>

## **Appendix D: Frequently Asked Questions: General**

### **When is the SAS Exam Centre open?**

Year-round. Please note the specific hours of operation below.

Fall/Winter Session (September - April):

Monday - Thursday 8:30 am - 9:00 pm

Friday\* 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

\* during the final exam period, we are open Fridays 8:30 am - 9:00 pm; Saturdays 8:30 am - 9:00 pm

Summer Session (May - August):

Monday - Friday\* 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

\* during midterms and finals, we are open 8:30 am - 9:00 pm

### **Does Student Accessibility Services help with staff accommodation needs?**

Staff and faculty should contact [Employee Wellness](#) for assistance.

The On-Campus Van Service is booked through Student Accessibility Services for students or staff with mobility disabilities; please call the SAS Exam Centre at 204-474-6213.

Interpreting Services: Sign Language Interpreters and Transcriptionists are available for other events on or off campus on a fee-for-service basis. Please submit the details of your event and request for Interpreters or Transcriptionists through our main email at [student\\_accessibility@umanitoba.ca](mailto:student_accessibility@umanitoba.ca)

### **What if I did not receive a student's letter of accommodation and the student is requesting something?**

Contact the Student Accessibility Services office and check it out. The student may not have registered with Student Accessibility Services yet (i.e. may not have requested accommodation), or if they are registered, they may not have reactivated their file for the current term.

### **Can students register throughout the term?**

Yes. Sometimes a student does not get documentation of their disability any earlier, and therefore could not initiate accommodations earlier. Some students like to try to take a class without accommodations and then register if they find they are struggling and need accommodations. In other cases, a temporary disability such as a break or sprain may occur at any point during the term.

If a student requests accommodations too late in the term, appropriate arrangements may not be possible. An example of such a request might be a student requesting an entire textbook be converted to alternate format close to the end of a semester. In this case, Student Accessibility Services will work with you and the student to determine the appropriate course of action.

### **What if I don't understand a recommended accommodation?**

Contact the Accessibility Coordinator listed on the student's Letter of Accommodation (found in the SAS Scheduler in JUMP) to discuss your questions and/or concerns.

### **What if I don't know what my responsibility is?**

The Student Accessibility Procedure outlines the responsibilities and rights of Academic Staff Members. Also, you can contact the Student Accessibility Services office; we are happy to answer your questions.

## **Do reasonable accommodations mean lower standards for students with disabilities?**

No. All students are required to demonstrate that they have successfully achieved the learning outcomes for each course. However, the method of demonstrating that may differ for students with disabilities who require accommodations. Please refer to the section in this handbook entitled “Reasonable Accommodation” for further information or contact Student Accessibility Services to discuss.

## **What if a student in my class needs Notetaking – what do I do?**

If a student has notetaking as one of their accommodations (it will be listed on the Letter of Accommodation we email to you), please make an announcement at the beginning of the course requesting two volunteers to take and share notes in your class. There is no need for more than two volunteers per class as all students in your class using this accommodation will have access to the same notes. Please direct volunteers to report to Student Accessibility Services website.

## **I have a student who is having difficulty in my class. I think they may have a disability. What should I do to help them?**

Talk privately with the student to discuss your observation that they are struggling. You can provide information about the different student services available on campus such as Student Accessibility Services, Student Counselling Centre, University Health Services, or the Academic Learning Centre. (Please note that many other student services are available on campus; a SAS staff would be happy to discuss these with you if you are not sure where to refer the student.)

If you think a student has a Learning Disability, or if the student suspects they have one, you can refer the student to Student Accessibility Services for a meeting. The SAS staff will provide information to the student about assessment options, and refer them to the appropriate resources.

Since many students who suspect they have a Learning Disability or who were diagnosed as children with a Learning Disability arrive at the University of Manitoba without documentation, comprehensive assessments are provided through the University of Manitoba’s Learning Disability Clinic. Students who would like to be assessed for a learning disability will be referred by their Accessibility Coordinator to fill out the questionnaire at the Student Counselling Centre, located at 474 University Centre. This service is on hold for the 2017-2018 year. SAS can refer the student to outside services.

## **What do I do if a student displays worrisome or threatening behavior in the classroom?**

If there is a safety or medical concern, contact 911 and Security Services at 555 immediately.

Student Accessibility Services staff members are always available to consult in situations. Please note that not all worrisome or threatening behavior will be associated with a disability.

If you know the student is registered with Student Accessibility Services, you can contact their Accessibility Coordinator to discuss the situation. The SAS staff may refer you to other resources, or may offer to contact the student directly to discuss the situation.

Please review the following link for reporting worrisome or threatening behavior from a student or staff member. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/media/statis-brochure-web.pdf>

## **What do I do if other students complain about accommodations made for students with disabilities?**

You can inform them of the University’s dedication to providing accessible accommodation to all students, and educate them about the need to accommodate students with disabilities. Proper

accommodations do not provide an advantage to students; they simply even the playing field when a student is experiencing a barrier to their education.

## **Appendix E: Frequently Asked Questions: Tests & Exams**

### **How do students book exams?**

Information about the test/exam booking procedures can be found on our website at <http://umanitoba.ca/student/accessibility/sas-scheduler/scheduling-an-exam.html>

### **How far in advance should I schedule my exams?**

The SAS Exam Centre needs students to book their tests at least 2 weeks in advance. Please ensure that you inform your students of exam dates, times and locations with enough notice for them to do so.

### **Can students write deferred exams with your office?**

Yes. All deferred exams are treated like regular exams. Students should book their deferred exams with the SAS Exam Centre as soon as they are informed of the date and time.

### **Am I required to fill out an exam form for each student and each exam?**

No. You can upload an electronic version of the test/exam to the SAS online scheduler. Information about this can be found here: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/accessibility/sas-scheduler/faculty.html>  
When uploading the tests/exams, you will be able to add any pertinent information such as whether or not a student is able to use a calculator or other subject-specific tools, if a student can bring in any academic materials (i.e. Formula sheet, course notes, etc.) and if the student must hand in all the test material when they are finished.

If you decide to send the test/exam via email or drop off in-person, an email with the details outlined above is sufficient.

### **Where Should I Drop Off Tests/Exams, and When?**

Tests/exams can be uploaded electronically to the SAS online scheduler. Information about this can be found here: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/accessibility/sas-scheduler/faculty.html>

You can also deliver tests/exams to the Student Accessibility Services Exam Centre at 155 University Centre in person, e-mail to [sasexams@umanitoba.ca](mailto:sasexams@umanitoba.ca) or fax to (204) 261-7732 three (3) days prior to the scheduled exam date.

Some students who use our office require large printed tests or other alternate formats so receiving the exam in advance is required to ensure the student's materials are ready for them on the test day.

Final exams will be requested from the Registrar's Office. If an exam is not being printed by Registrar's Office, we will call instructors to request a copy of the exam.

### **How Do SAS Staff Ensure That Students Are Not Cheating?**

Students will write in semi-private or group rooms booked by the Student Accessibility Services offices. An invigilator is stationed inside the room. If a student is using an AT space, the room will have a full length window in the door so that staff can monitor the student who is writing. Staff check in on the students by entering the room frequently.

Students are not allowed to bring any books, bags, or other materials into the room with them unless



the instructor has approved this on the test/exam form. All students will be asked if they have anything in their pockets, and will be asked to leave any materials with the SAS Exam Centre front desk, including any electronic communication devices such as phones, smart watches etc.

### **What If A Student Has Questions During the Test/Exam?**

If the student has a question during the test/exam, the SAS Exam Centre will try and contact you by phone or email. If you have a cell phone that can be called during the exam, please indicate the number on the exam particular form. If you are not reachable by phone, the SAS invigilator will either walk with the student to the classroom where the test is being written or ask the student to write down the question and bring the question to you. If the student is writing at a different time from the class, it is helpful if you have a phone number where you can be reached if there are questions. The SAS Exam Centre welcomes instructors to stop by the office at any time during the test/exam to see if there are any questions.

If you are not available for questions during the time the student is writing your test with our office, the SAS invigilator will indicate any unanswered questions on the form that is returned to you with the exam. In these cases, SAS asks that you grade the student's exam with the understanding that the student did not have access to ask their question.

### **How Will You Return The Completed Tests/Exams To Me?**

The SAS Exam Centre has volunteer staff who will deliver the completed test/exam to your department's general office within 2-3 days. If you prefer to pick the exam, please inform the SAS Exam Centre and we will keep it on file until a member of your department is able to pick it up. If you require the test/exam to be returned to you quickly, the SAS Exam Centre can send it to you via on-campus courier at your expense.

### **What if I cannot find an exam written by a student through the Student Accessibility Services office?**

Contact Student Accessibility Services as the exam may still be on file or have been delivered to your department office. We keep a detailed log of delivery dates and receiver signatures.

## Appendix F: Creating Accessible Documents

The term “accessible documents” is something that SAS uses regularly and you may be wondering what this means. An accessible document is any document (.Doc, .PDF, etc.) that can be used by any person, regardless of barriers that may be in place as a result of disability or otherwise. For example, an accessible document would have visual contrast and an appropriate and comprehensible layout. It would also have proper tagging in place so that it is navigable with screen-reading software and readable by text-to-speech technology.

Producing accessible documents is incredibly important for students with disabilities, as they will not have access to the materials otherwise. Accessible documents also provide added opportunities for studying and reading, especially for those with English as an additional language or those who have different learning styles. Production of accessible documents is generally quite simple and, in the case of *most* documents, will actually save you time and increase consistency within the document. It is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that the documents they are creating and providing are as accessible as possible in order to be as inclusionary as possible. Adding a few easy steps to your document-creating process will save you a lot of work in the event you have a student specifically requesting an accessible format.

All features that make a document accessible are features within word processors that should be used for proper document production. Unfortunately, these features are often overlooked!

Here are some points to consider to ensure that you are not providing inaccessible documents:

NEVER provide a document that is a scanned piece of paper – a scan of a document is an image.

Therefore, there is no text or structure that any assistive technologies may be able to read. Instead, please provide an accessible source document – this is much easier than fixing a completely inaccessible one!

Don’t use images as text - using a picture to convey text can cause readability issues for those with a cognitive disability and wreak havoc on a person with a visual disability using a screen reader.

Don’t use a similar color font to the background - use the highest color contrast as possible.

Don’t just use font color, size, and alignment to indicate titles and headings – use the format styles to ensure there is document structure embedded into the document.

To learn how to make an accessible .Doc or .PDF, or for tips to see if your current documents are accessible, please check out the instructions provided on the [SAS website](#).