



An Introduction to Disability and Access (D&A)

D&A's primary role is to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to their academic experience at The University of Texas at Austin. As part of this effort, D&A also provides trainings and consults with UT campus offices and departments to facilitate access and inclusion in all aspects of campus life.

D&A works with students with a broad range of disabilities including:

- ADHD
- Autism
- Brain Injury
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Learning Disabilities
- Medical Conditions (diabetes, migraines, epilepsy, etc.)
- Mobility Disabilities
- Psychological/ Mental Health Conditions
- Temporary (broken bones, concussion, etc)
- Visual Disabilities

Students who have questions about whether their condition qualifies as a disability are encouraged to contact D&A. Details of a student's disability are kept confidential within the D&A office. Students must submit disability documentation and complete an intake appointment to [register with D&A](#) for academic accommodation.

D&A works with students to approve academic accommodations that may include:

- Extended time on exams
- Reduced distraction testing environment
- Use of computer for notetaking and/or essay exams
- Copy of notes and/or slides
- Breaks during class or exams
- Flexibility with attendance
- Flexibility with deadlines

More information about [D&A Accommodations and Services](#) is available on the D&A website.

Accommodations cannot change the essential requirements of a course, program or degree. Students should notify instructors of their need for accommodations via an Accommodation Letter, provided by D&A. Students and instructors

must discuss the approved accommodations and coordinate how they will be provided within the context of each course. D&A staff are available to address student or instructor questions or concerns regarding accommodations.

D&A also offers the following supports and services to students:

- Course load reduction (full time status, non-academic drop)
- Computer lab with assistive technology (Kurzweil, ZoomText)
- Drop-In hours for consultation/problem-solving
- Referrals and potential funding for disability evaluation/testing
- Disability-specific scholarships
- Student groups and events

The University of Texas at Austin is required to provide equal access by three federal laws:

- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973,
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008

Faculty and staff play a vital role in ensuring compliance and providing access by accommodating students with disabilities. D&A is available to consult with faculty or staff who have questions about how to accommodate or work with a student with a disability.

Additional resources are also available on the [faculty/staff section](#) of the D&A website.

For more information:

Disability and Access

- **PHONE:** (512) 471-6259
- **EMAIL:** access@austin.utexas.edu
- **WEB:** <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>
- **ON CAMPUS:** Student Services Building (SSB) 4.206



Tips for Instructors Providing Accommodations

- The accommodation process starts when students and instructors receive email notification from D&A about a student's Accommodation Letter (which can be accessed via the D&A Portal). Students and Instructors must then discuss accommodations listed in the Accommodation Letter from D&A before accommodations can be provided. Ideally this conversation will be started by the student but instructors are encouraged to provide a safe and supportive space for discussion. Students should not expect to receive accommodations on the same day the letter is delivered. Accommodations are not retroactive.
- Accommodations are provided in order to ensure students have equal access to their academic endeavors. Accommodations cannot change the essential requirements of a course, program or degree. Instructors who have questions or concerns about an approved accommodation should contact the student's Disabilities Services Coordinator, who is listed in the Accommodation Letter.
- Students with disabilities have met the same admissions standards as any other students. Treat students with disabilities with the same courtesy you would afford to other students and hold them to the same academic standards and expectations as any other student.
- Failure to provide approved accommodations may put UT at risk for non-compliance with federal and state laws. Instructors with questions or concerns should contact D&A before telling the student an accommodation(s) cannot be provided.
- A student's disability(ies) has been verified by the D&A office based on documentation from a healthcare provider. Students do not have to disclose their diagnosis or their disability to anyone outside the D&A office and should not provide disability documentation directly to an instructor. Treat disability information which has been disclosed to you as confidential.
- Students have a right to use accommodations but they also have responsibilities they must abide by in order to use their accommodations. Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found on the D&A website: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/rights-and-responsibilities/> Students who fail to follow through on their responsibilities may be delayed in receiving their accommodations.
- More than 90% of students using accommodations have "invisible disabilities" which means you cannot see their disability. Examples of invisible disabilities include ADHD, Autism, Learning Disabilities, Mental Health Conditions, Medical Conditions, Visual Disabilities or Hearing Disabilities. Do not question or doubt the presence of a disability just because it is not apparent.
- Encourage students to follow university's policies, such as registering with D&A to receive accommodations. This protects students, faculty and the institution by ensuring consistency. Violations have been found in cases where faculty members have not followed institutional policies or have failed to properly refer students to the appropriate offices.
- Instructors should enlist the support of their departments to secure resources for accommodating students. Ensuring accessibility is the responsibility of individual instructors as well as departments and colleges/schools.
- Each member of the UT community plays a role in creating an accessible and inclusive environment at UT. It is essential for faculty, staff and departments to consider accessibility as they develop, plan and implement programs, classes, activities, etc.

Additional resources and information about accommodating students with disabilities can be found on the D&A website:

<http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/facultystaff/>