

SAS Faculty Newsletter

Kent State University, Student Accessibility Services
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Excellence in Action

Providing Equal Access To All

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Spring 2008 issue of the SAS Faculty Newsletter. The Student Accessibility Services (SAS) staff works closely with approximately 400 individual faculty members each semester. We hope this newsletter will become a means of communication and provide valuable information, resources, and awareness related to students with disabilities and the SAS office.

CHANGE IN OFFICE SAS HOURS

Please note the change in the SAS Office hours effective immediately. SAS is no longer open late on *Tuesday and Wednesday evenings*. Our new late evening hours and days are:

Fall & Spring Semesters

Mon. & Thurs. 8:00 –7:00 p.m.

Tues., Wed. & Fri. 8:00 –5:00 p.m.



Summer hours M – F 8:00 – 5:00 p.m.

IMPORTANT

**CHANGE
IN SAS
EVENING
HOURS**

DO YOU HAVE ANY ACCESSIBILITY CONCERNS

Occasionally, a student who uses certain assistive technologies, such as a screen reader, will notify us of accessibility issues regarding VISTA related content. In an effort to help resolve these issues, we have hired a Graduate Assistant, whose primary responsibility is "web accessibility". If you have any concerns about accessibility with your class web site and would like us to evaluate it, please email Mollie Miller at mmiller@kent.edu.

1,040 students with disabilities were registered with Student Accessibility Services for AY0607.

Ninety-two (92%) of those students have hidden disabilities.

FACULTY: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Am I obligated to comply with a student's request for accommodations?

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, you are required to provide requested accommodations if the student has a documented disability. Most students with a disability are registered with the office of Student Accessibility Services (SAS). However, there will be students who will ask for accommodations who are not registered with the office of Student Accessibility Services. We ask that you refer these students to our office to complete the required registration process and provide the necessary documentation to substantiate the presence of a disability.

When do I refer a student to the office of Student Accessibility Services?

Referrals to our office come from faculty, staff, and other students. In general, if a student discusses a disability and its impact academically, and if the student has not already registered with SAS, refer him or her to us. If, for example, a student requests accommodations, but does not provide you with a letter from our office, you should refer him or her to our office to apply for services. You might let the student know that it is important for our office to have supporting documentation of the disability so that we can determine and provide appropriate services.

What is the process that the student must go through to get services from SAS?

A student must first come into the SAS office and register. This registration process includes an intake in which a student and Accessibility Specialist discuss the disability as it relates to the academic environment. Students must provide current documentation of their disability. It is our office's job to determine whether or not that student is eligible to receive the requested accommodations based on this documentation. If the documentation does not support a requested accommodation, the service is denied until supporting documentation can be provided. Once a student is eligible for services, he or she receives an explanation of how the accommodation process works, including detailed information on how to request accommodations.

**Approximately
4,000 exams
are proctored
by SAS in an
Academic Year**

**SAS works with
approximately
400 Faculty
members each
semester**

Students are then asked to come into the SAS office to pick up their accommodation letters, which they will later deliver to their instructors. We tell students that these letters are a communication tool between the student and the instructor, and that it is important to talk with their instructors about their accommodation needs. If the accommodations are not working for a student, it is the student's responsibility to talk with their instructor or come back to SAS to discuss his or her concerns.

What are the student's responsibilities?

First, it is the student's responsibility to come to our office and register. Second, students are responsible for getting accommodation letters each semester and giving them to their instructors. SAS does not send out letters to faculty. Letters are delivered to you by the students themselves. Lastly, it is the students' responsibility to update our office if they have issues or concerns.

What are my responsibilities as an instructor?

The responsibilities of an instructor extend into two main areas. The first involves the actual provision of accommodations to a student. After the student communicates his or her accommodation needs through the SAS accommodation letter, the instructor must ensure that the accommodation takes place.

For example, a student may be entitled to extended time for exams. To receive this accommodation, students may choose to take his or her exam in the SAS office, in which case it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor where they will be taking the exam. It is your responsibility, as the professor, to send the exam to our office. This can be done in one of three different methods:

1. **Electronic Format** – email the exam to sds_exams@kent.edu. Electronic format is the preferred method of delivery due to the clarity of text and ease of providing necessary accommodations (i.e. enlarged exams, Brailled materials, etc.)
2. **Fax** – send the exam through departmental fax at (330) 672-3763 (2-3763 on-campus)
3. **Hand-Deliver Exam** – deliver the exam directly to the SAS office located on the Ground Floor of the DeWeese Center.

* **NOTE:** The SAS office assumes responsibility for the security of the exam once it is received. To ensure the security of exams, please do not send an exam through campus mail.

Exams should be sent to the SAS office a minimum of 24 hours in advance of the scheduled exam time. This ensures our staff will be able to provide any necessary accommodations for the student (i.e. Brailled materials, enlarged font, etc.).

The second area involves confidentiality. Confidentiality is very crucial and simply means that when a student discloses a disability to an instructor, the information should be kept strictly between the instructor and the student only.

I give pop quizzes and other in-class assignments in my class. Do I need to provide accommodations for these assignments?

Remember that the same accommodations that apply to full-length exams also apply to pop and other quizzes, in-class writing, or other in-class assignments. For quizzes, the student should be scheduled to complete the quiz either the same day or as close as possible to the same day. A possible solution for quizzes in which a student requires extended time would be to have the student start in class and finish after class.

Students may choose to take their quizzes in the office of Student Accessibility Services. Please feel free to contact our office for special arrangements for any pop quizzes. A possible solution for in-class assignments would be to consider giving the student until later that day or the next day to complete the assignment. Discuss these issues in your initial meeting with the student. Again, please don't hesitate to contact SAS if you have any questions or concerns regarding arrangements for quizzes or in-class assignments.

Is it fair to other students to provide accommodations to those students with disabilities?

It would be unfair and discriminatory not to provide the accommodations, as the individual with the disability learns and performs in a different manner than the student without a disability. It is our goal as an institution to level the playing field for students with disabilities.

What can I expect if a student files a grievance?

If a student brings a grievance to the office of Student Accessibility Services, the grievance will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Typically, the instructor and student are brought together and the Student Accessibility Services staff will mediate and try to come up with possible solutions. The student may also choose to involve others outside of SAS, for example the office of Student Ombuds. Students may choose to use SAS staff as advocates throughout this process, which is not to say that SAS will always side with the student.

Where can I get the disability statement for my syllabus?

The disability statement for a syllabus can be found on the Student Accessibility Services website at:

http://www.registrars.kent.edu/disability/faculty_staff/index.htm

“Roughly 10% of students obtaining a post-secondary education report some type of disability. And many believe that number is an underestimation.”

Adaptive Educational Services. Citing Internet Resources. [Online] Available <http://www.iupui.edu/~slidweb/aes/faculty/course.html>, December 7, 2007.

I received an accommodation letter from a student but he never spoke to me about the letter or his accommodation needs. What do I do? What are my responsibilities?

It is the responsibility of each student to communicate with the instructor about his or her accommodation needs. We talk to students during the registration process about this issue and provide the student with a summary of the accommodation process every time they collect their accommodation letters for the semester. However, we know that some students fail to make contact with you after the initial meeting. While it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with you, when the student fails to come forward after delivering the letter, you may want to approach, call or email him or her.

A student handed me a letter at the beginning of the semester and it was understood that she needed to make arrangements with me a few days before an exam in order to receive extended time and a low distraction room. The student showed up on the day of the exam without making prior arrangements but asked for the testing accommodations. What do I do?

As long as it was very clearly understood that the student needed to approach you prior to each exam, you are not obligated to provide the accommodations, as it was the student's responsibility to make arrangements with you. If there is any doubt as to how clear it was, do what you can to provide the accommodation. After the exam, please refer these students to the office of Student Accessibility Services for further clarification of their role and responsibility as a student.

A student stated, "the office of Student Accessibility Services would not let me take my test in their office because they were already too full."

According to the SAS exam policy, students are required to schedule their exam **3 business days in advance** in order for the SAS staff to prepare for any necessary accommodations. As long as the student has followed the "**3 day exam policy**" he or she would not be turned away because the SAS office is "full". This is discussed during the student's registration with the SAS office and also given to all students registered with SAS in written format each semester. If a student fails to comply with this policy, he or she is told to contact their professor to discuss the possibility of alternative testing.

APHONT is the font used in this newsletter. It was developed by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). Its characteristics have been shown to enhance reading speed, comprehension, and comfort for large print users.

What is meant by “extended time on exams”?

Extended time on exams is either time and a half for multiple-choice exams or double time for math, short answer or essay exams. For example, if a student is taking a multiple-choice exam (time and a half) and the class period is 50 minutes, the extended time would be an hour and 15 minutes. If a student is taking a math exam (double time) and the class period is 50 minutes, the extended time would be one hour and 40 minutes. It is rare, but possible, that a student might need more than double time due to the severity of the disability or the type of accommodation that is being provided.

What is considered a “reduced distraction environment”?

A reduced distraction environment can mean different things to different students. In general, a reduced distraction environment is a quiet place where the student can take an exam. Instructors can choose to proctor their own exam in an office or a free classroom. Sending the student to the hallway outside the classroom is not a legitimate interpretation of “reduced distraction.” If the instructor or test proctor stays in the room, the student’s desk can be turned toward a wall. It is important to make every attempt to remain quiet. Asking the student repeatedly if he or she needs anything or is almost finished is distracting and should be avoided.

Is there a specific topic that you would like to see covered in this faculty newsletter? Please e-mail suggestions to mmiller@kent.edu

Coming in the next issue:

Through Their Eyes: A Student Perspective on, “Attending College with a Disability”

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