

FAQs

Understanding Accommodations

What is the purpose of academic accommodations, and how do they support student access at A-State?

Accommodations level the playing field for students with disabilities. They remove barriers that students without disabilities don't have to navigate so disabled students can adequately show what they are capable of. Accommodations don't guarantee success, but they improve access.

How do I know if a student is approved for accommodations?

You will receive an accommodations notification email from The Office of Access and Accommodation Services.

What information is included in an accommodation letter, and what information is intentionally not included?

The student's name, class, and a list of their accommodations are included. Information regarding their diagnosis is not included to help protect their privacy and confidentiality. Faculty should not request disability documentation from students.

Why don't accommodation letters list a student's diagnosis?

This is to be consistent with HIPAA and protect a student's privacy and confidentiality.

What should I do if a student requests accommodations but has no letter from Access & Accommodation Services?

Ask them if they are registered with our office and if they have requested their accommodations for this semester (they must request accommodations every semester through their online AIM account). If they are not affiliated with AAS, encourage them to get registered.

Implementing Accommodations

When should I expect to receive accommodation letters, and what is my responsibility once I receive them?

Generally, accommodation letters are sent by the first day of classes each semester. However, there is no deadline to register with AAS because disability or a temporary impairment can happen unexpectedly, it may take a while to get a diagnosis, etc.

Once a letter is received, follow the outlined accommodations plan. If there are questions or concerns about facilitating accommodations due to essential requirements of a course or program, contact AAS immediately for further discussion.

How do I implement accommodations that require advance planning, such as extended time or reduced distraction testing?

Generally, if a student has testing accommodations, they test in the AAS office, and it is their responsibility to schedule their exams with AAS at least 3 business days in advance. When they schedule their exams, faculty are notified and can plan accordingly. Please note: If testing accommodations can be facilitated in the classroom environment and the student is comfortable in that setting, that is acceptable.

What if a student gives me their accommodation letter late in the semester; do I still have to implement accommodations?

Accommodations are not generally retroactive, so you typically do not have to accommodate anything done before you received notice of accommodations. But accommodations should be implemented from the time notification was received and moving forward.

What should I do if I believe an accommodation fundamentally alters an essential course requirement?

Contact AAS immediately for further discussion to see if any alternative accommodations are possible.

How do I handle accommodations in courses with labs, clinicals, practicums, or field placements?

Generally, testing accommodations for labs are handled in the lab setting. Other accommodations for labs, clinicals, practicums, and field placements are handled on a case-by-case basis, involving collaboration between AAS, faculty, students, and other parties because the structure and requirements for these experiences are unique to each program.

Attendance, Deadlines, and Flexibility

How do I determine whether attendance flexibility is reasonable for my course?

If it is a performance-based course or a practical, internship setting, flexible attendance may be difficult to facilitate. Please contact AAS to collaborate in these cases.

What is the difference between short-term illness (handled by the student and instructor) and disability related attendance considerations (handled through Access & Accommodation Services)?

A short-term illness is something like the flu, cold, COVID, stomach bug, etc. Students would not register with AAS in these cases. A disability-related issue is regarding a symptom or issue related

to a long-term disability for which AAS would have a record. A temporary impairment is something that substantially limits one or more major life activities for 6 months or less.

What should I do if a student misses class due to a disability related reason?

If they have a flexible attendance accommodation, honor that accommodation. If they do not, follow your general policy and encourage them to register with our office if they aren't already or to update their accommodations plan, if needed.

How do I document and communicate expectations when a student has attendance-related accommodations?

Our general rule of thumb is that flexible attendance allows a disabled student with a flexible attendance accommodation twice as many absences as the university policy would allow (about 40% of the course). Once absences exceed that limit, follow your general policy. Students should be emailing faculty when they are missing due to disability reasons as a way to track those occurrences.

Why are students given attendance consideration and deadline extensions?

Students can be given these accommodations for several reasons, including but not limited to chronic health conditions, seizure disorder, severe migraines, etc. Often, many students have concurrent diagnoses, so they are juggling more than one diagnosis, various medications to manage symptoms, symptoms that exacerbate other conditions, etc., and we consider all those variables.

How do I handle accommodations that say "extended time, as needed"?

Generally, we try to put a time limit on extended time for assignments (up to 1 day, up to 2 days, up to 3 days). In rare cases, you might see "as needed". The faculty would work directly with the student to determine what a reasonable extension looks like for a particular assignment or course.

How do I handle a student who asks for extensions beyond what their accommodations allow?

This would be done at the professors' discretion.

Testing and Exams

How do I arrange extended time or reduced distraction testing for students?

If the test is online, extended time can be done in Canvas or whichever online platform(s); the student is responsible for their own low-distraction environment. For assistance with applying extended time for online exams, faculty should contact CETL.

If the test is on paper, students can choose to take it in the classroom with or without accommodations (faculty members will work with the student to determine if accommodations can be facilitated in the classroom), or schedule to take the exam with AAS. All students wishing to take

their exam in the AAS office must follow our scheduling procedures.

What is my responsibility if a student prefers to test with me instead of AAS?

If accommodations can be facilitated in the classroom, this is acceptable.

What should I do if a student's accommodation requires assistive technology during exams?

In these cases, the student would most likely test with AAS, and we will work with the student to provide any assistive technology required and/or monitor the use of said assistive technology.

How do I handle pop quizzes or in-class timed activities for students with testing accommodations?

Discuss this with AAS if needed. However, the most common suggestion is to notify the student the morning of the "pop" quiz and allow them to come in earlier or test after class. Alternative assignments that measure the same content might be necessary, as pop quizzes or timed assignments in the classroom setting are inherently inaccessible.

What if students have accommodations for testing that won't be allowed on board exams?

For any national or state test, legally, there must be an accommodations process. Even if accommodations are rarely granted, that does not mean it is impossible. **That being said, accommodations determined by the AAS office for the educational setting should be implemented as required.** Conversations should be had with students explaining that while accommodations on these exams are possible, the board's accommodations process is different, may require different levels of documentation, and all accommodations granted in school may not be granted in these cases.

Communication and Boundaries

How do I talk with a student about their accommodations without asking for medical details?

We encourage you to ask them what would make your class and material most accessible to them or something similar.

What should I do if a student discloses personal or medical information I don't need to know?

This may mean they are comfortable with you, which is a good thing! Thank them for sharing and ask them if they are registered with AAS or have talked to their access counselor about these concerns to ensure they have the support they need.

How do I encourage students to use their accommodations appropriately and proactively?

Talk to the student directly about the importance of using their resources. Also, think about how you talk about disability and accommodations in your classrooms. How we talk about disability, accessibility, and accommodations influences how students and others think about it and whether or not they use the resources available to them.

What is the best way to communicate concerns about a student's academic performance when they have accommodations?

Talk to the student directly. If additional guidance is needed, contact AAS via email, phone, or set up a meeting for further discussion.

Accessible Course Materials

What do I need to know about captioning requirements for videos used in class?

All videos must include captions that are accurate, easy to read, and positioned so they do not obscure important on-screen content. Captions must provide an equitable viewing experience for individuals who cannot hear the audio. This requirement applies to all videos, whether they are shown during class, assigned as homework, or made available in any other setting. Captions must remain enabled whenever videos are shown during an in-person setting.

If you own or create the video content, you are responsible for ensuring it is properly captioned. The Assistive Technology and Access Coordinator, CETL, and AOS Faculty Support are available to provide guidance and training.

If you do not own the video content, you are responsible for verifying that its captions meet A-State accessibility standards. Videos with captions that do not meet these standards are considered inaccessible and may not be used. If you believe a video is essential and cannot be replaced with an accessible alternative, please contact AAS to discuss available options and determine the appropriate next steps.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

What are my legal responsibilities under the ADA and Section 504 as an instructor at A State?

Follow a student's accommodations plan when it is sent to you. If there are any questions or concerns about accommodations or how to facilitate them, contact AAS immediately to collaborate to meet the needs of students.

What rights do faculty have when implementing accommodations?

Instructors have the right to require official verification from AAS before providing accommodations, consult on implementation methods, and challenge accommodations that fundamentally alter their course and work with the AAS office to assess what alternatives might be possible.

What should I do if I'm unsure how to implement an accommodation correctly?

Contact AAS as soon as possible to collaborate.

How do I document my efforts to provide accommodations?

Document them in whatever way feels most appropriate to you. Email is always a safe bet when communicating with AAS or the student. Even if you have phone conversations or meetings regarding facilitating accommodations, try to follow those up with an email.

Student Support and Referrals

When should I refer a student to Access & Accommodation Services?

If they disclose a disability condition to you or if you feel they may be able to use support from AAS. They can meet with an access counselor, and we will determine if they qualify as a person with a disability.

How do I support a student who is struggling academically but does not have accommodations?

Make a referral to our office if you feel that would benefit them. Also, make referrals to other support services on campus (counseling, tutoring, academic coaching, etc.). Faculty may also submit a Pack Support, and the appropriate individuals will do an outreach to the student.

What campus resources pair well with accommodations?

Tutoring, counseling, and academic coaching all benefit students with disabilities.

Other

Why are students given permission to record, and what if I don't allow recording in my classes?

Permission to record can address various disability conditions, including but not limited to diagnoses such as ADHD, chronic pain, migraines, learning disabilities, anxiety, depression, etc. Having a blanket policy where something is not allowed under any circumstances is inherently inaccessible. Please discuss your concerns with AAS staff to determine how recording can be made feasible for all involved or other alternative accommodations that would meet the student's need in the same way that recording class lectures would meet that need.

What if I'm concerned about accommodations being abused/misused?

Contact AAS immediately to discuss your concerns and AAS staff will reach out to the student for further discussion.

Some things students are given as accommodations won't be allowed at work. How are students being prepared for the "real world" or workforce?

Legally, workplace accommodations must be granted if requested by a disabled person. While similar, the accommodations process may look different in work settings, but accommodations are granted in these cases. Conversations about navigating workplace accommodations are often a topic of discussion between students and AAS. We note that workplace accommodations are a legal requirement. The workplace accommodations process may look different, may require different levels of documentation, and all accommodations granted in the educational environment may not be granted in the workplace setting, but accommodations are possible. Additionally, while students may need accommodations in the educational setting because different things are being measured and required of them, accommodations may not be necessary in the workplace.

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