

## Quick Reference Guide to Disabilities

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder:** generally characterized by an inability to pay close attention to detail, difficulty sustaining attention, forgetfulness in daily activities, impulsive behavior, disorganization, and other related symptoms. This student requires a need for structure and support with organization and focus.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder:** student has difficulties in social and communication skills. The student is often intelligent, but uncomfortable in social settings; he/she may prefer working independently rather than in groups. They also sometimes have sensory issues or become fixated on a topic, talking excessively about that topic, and sometimes avoid eye contact with others.

**Blindness or Visual Impairments:** students will have varying degrees of visual impairment, which will determine the type of accommodations needed. Instructors who have students with a visual impairment or blindness should be conscious of teaching style needed to support the student's success, such as use of auditory cues and explaining diagrams and other visuals used for demonstration.

**Chronic Medical Conditions:** refers to any of a number of health-related conditions that may affect the respiratory, neurological, circulatory, or immune system of the body. The symptoms of these conditions are unstable and unpredictable and may be episodic. Symptoms of these conditions may affect energy level, attention, mobility, concentration, and a variety of other characteristics related to academic study. Side effects of the medications used for these conditions often cause the most severe symptoms. Some examples in this category are diabetes, recurrent cancer, autoimmune disorders such as lupus or rheumatoid arthritis, respiratory conditions, AIDS, blood disorders, Lyme disease, Crohn's disease, seizure disorders, epilepsy, sickle cell anemia, or cardiac disorders.

**Communication Disorders:** student has difficulty processing receptive language or using expressive language effectively. This student often has difficulty following directions or making oral presentations.

**Deafness or Hearing Impairments:** students will have varying degrees of hearing impairment, which will determine the type of accommodations needed. Some may need an interpreter while others can read lips. Instructors may want to learn a few signs to help a student with a hearing impairment function in the classroom. Faculty should also be aware that students with hearing impairments or deafness might not have developed strong language skills. Provide visual cues and assistance with understanding notes from auditory lectures.

**Learning Disabilities:** best described as an inability to acquire or relate specific information. It can exist in one or more academic areas: reading, written language, or math. Students with learning disabilities often have difficulty with metacognition and cognitive strategies.

**Neurological Impairments:** a disorder of the body's nervous system. Structural, biochemical, or electrical abnormalities in the brain, spinal cord, or in the nerves leading to or from them, can result in symptoms such as paralysis, muscle weakness, poor coordination, loss of sensation, seizures, confusion, pain, and altered levels of consciousness. Some such disorders are multiple muscular dystrophy and cerebral palsy.

**Orthopedic Impairments:** composed of various mobility types, such as spinal cord injuries, arthritis, amputated limbs, or joint disorders. Student who have an orthopedic impairment may use orthotic, prosthetic, or mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, canes, walkers, or Segway scooters. Service dogs are also used as an aid. It is important that students with an orthopedic impairment are given ample room for any adaptive equipment they may need to bring to class and to modify the environment as needed. wheelchair.

**Psychological Disorders:** some types of psychological disorders include depression, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, bipolar disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorders. Each psychological disorder varies in degree and intensity. The social stigma associated with psychological disorders may be the greatest obstacle to overcome. Confidentiality is vital with this type of disorder. Anxiety resulting from this disorder can cause test-taking problems.

**Traumatic Brain Injuries:** Traumatic brain injury usually results from a violent blow or jolt to the head that causes the brain to collide with the inside of the skull. Some signs and symptoms of TBI are: Memory or concentration problems, slurred speech, headaches, dizziness or loss of balance, nausea or vomiting, mood swings, feeling depressed or anxious, or fatigue or drowsiness. Accommodations will vary based on the severity of the TBI and its symptoms.