

# Disability Support Services Scenarios

## What would you do?

*(answers/ rationale located at the end of this document)*

1. **Scenario:** Bobby is a student in your Intro to Knitting class. On the third day of class, Bobby passes his accommodation letter to the front of the classroom, attached to his homework assignment. You've never met Bobby, and quite frankly, only know who he is because he's the only male in the class. You assume Bobby will be using all of his accommodations, which includes reduced distraction testing and extended time on exams. You send his test over to DSS and arrange to have him use double time. However, on the day of the test Bobby shows up in class. You go ahead and give him the exam, assuming he's decided not to use his accommodations. When it's time to take up the exam, Bobby becomes very upset and says he wanted to use his double time, but not his reduced distraction accommodation.

**Question 1: Do you have to give this student double time?**

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2. **Scenario:** You have a student in your class who presented an accommodation memo at the beginning of the semester. You can tell during the 1-1 meeting with the student to discuss accommodations that this person has a hard time staying focused and seems very distracted. You have a brother who has adult ADHD and it seems very familiar. You've learned a lot from your brother about strategies that are helpful and you want to help this student, too.

**Question 2: Is it appropriate to ask the student to disclose her disability so that you can provide some additional support?**

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3. **Scenario:** You teach a large survey class with about 150 students. Most semesters you'll have 3-4 students with disabilities ask for accommodations. The first day of class to make it easier, you tell the students with disabilities to come to the front of the class as soon as class is over so you can make arrangements for accommodations.

**Question 3: Is this an appropriate way to arrange for students' accommodations in your class?**

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4. **Scenario:** A student in your class, Bridget, is constantly falling asleep. She lays her head down on the desk and sometimes snores lightly, and this is very disruptive to you and the other students in the class. Bridget gave you an accommodation memo at the beginning of the semester and informed you she is registered with DSS. You assume her sleeping in class is due to the disability, or a side effect of her medication and you do not mention that her sleeping in class is a problem, and try your best to ignore it.

**Question 4: Do you have to accommodate disruptive behavior if the behavior is due to a documented disability?**

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5. **Scenario:** Cindy has been enrolled in HY 101 for 14 weeks. Her professor, Dr. Jones, has noticed that Cindy has missed the majority of his classes (about 15/22). On the last day of class, Cindy approaches Dr. Jones and presents a DSS accommodation letter to him. Two of the accommodations on the letter state “reasonable number of disability related absences” and “permission to make-up assignments when absent due to disability-related absences.” Cindy states that she is aware she’s missed a lot of class and would like to talk to the professor about making up all of the tests, quizzes and assignments she’s missed during the term. Surprised by the student’s request, the professor accepts her accommodation letter and informs her that he will get back to her regarding a meeting to discuss what the next step will be. Dr. Jones went back to his office and called DSS to ask if he was expected to excuse the student’s absences and work with her on this matter.

**Question 5: Did the professor do the right thing by accepting the letter and telling the student he would get back to her regarding the next step?**

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6. **Scenario:** A student has registered for a lab course. The student is eligible for extended time on tests and a reduced distraction testing environment. This poses a difficult situation, as your lab is set up for a specified time just for the students to take the examination, which requires them to demonstrate specific skills that you have taught in the class. Students are allowed 4 minutes at each station to demonstrate the required skill. It’s important that students be able to perform the skill within the specified amount of time.

**Question 6: Are you expected to change the format of this examination for this student?**

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7. **Scenario:** David has enrolled in MA 126 (Calculus 2) and one of his accommodations is a peer notetaker. At the beginning of the semester he met with his professor, presented his accommodation letter and requested this accommodation from the professor. His professor agreed to locate a peer notetaker once classes started; however, after multiple announcements, no students have come forward to be David's notetaker. Desperate to try to help, David's professor began typing his own personal lecture notes and providing them to David in order to accommodate the student.

**Question 7: Did the professor have other options when he was unable to locate a notetaker?**

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8. **Scenario:** Mary is registered with DSS and one of her accommodations includes testing in a reduced distraction environment. In order to receive this accommodation she often tests at DSS. While taking her most recent exam, a DSS staff member catches Mary cheating. Following DSS procedures, the DSS staff member collects Mary's test as well as the "cheat sheet" Mary had in possession and contacts the professor to report the incident. When the professor meets with Mary to address the issue Mary says she has a terminal illness so the professor decides not to penalize her.

**Question 8: Should the professor have handled the cheating incident like any other cheating incident?**

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9. **Scenario:** Juan is registered with DSS and he is eligible for double time on his exams. Due to scheduling conflicts, one of his instructors wants to give Juan only half of the exam, without extra time, but the same amount of points. The professor thinks this will be a fair equivalent compared to the exam the rest of the class is taking. Juan is concerned and informs the teacher that he would rather take the whole test with accommodations.

**Question 9: Is giving Juan only half of the exam a reasonable accommodation according to the ADA?**

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10. **Scenario:** Dr. Brown has taught Shuffleboard 101 at UAB for 25 years. Recently, the department has learned that a student with a hearing impairment has registered for Dr. Brown's class and plans to major in Shuffleboarding. The professor and the department are very willing to accommodate and understand that a sign language interpreter will be present during their classes in order for the student to participate. On the second week of class Dr. Brown wheels in a TV and VCR. She begins explaining that today the class will watch her favorite video about the fine sport of Shuffleboard. She instructs the class to watch carefully as the techniques are perfectly demonstrated. Jenny, the hearing impaired student, raises her hand and through her interpreters says "does the video have captioning." The instructor replies "no, this was made in the sixties, but you can use your interpreter."

**Question 10: Is the professor appropriating accommodating the student? What other options should the professor of considered?**

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11. **Scenario:** The student, Jerry, turns in his accommodation letter to you at the beginning of the semester. You and the student talk about the research paper that is due in the middle of the semester. Jerry explains that because he is allowed extra time on IN-CLASS assignments, he would also like extra time on his term paper. Jerry tells you that his disability will make it really hard for him to complete the term paper on time like the rest of the class. Jerry requests a two-week extension on the deadline for the paper.

**Question 11: Should you give Jerry the extra time to complete this assignment?**

### Scenario Answers

1. **Answer:** NO. It is Bobby's responsibility to request a meeting to discuss what accommodations he plans to use. However, this could have been prevented by first providing a statement in your syllabus that tells students who wish to request accommodations to set up an appointment with you, provide a DSS memo, and specify which accommodations they intend to use in your class. In addition, you can e-mail any student who passes you an accommodation letter without meeting with you face-to-face, and request that the student meet with you to discuss accommodations if they wish to receive them in your class.

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2. **Answer:** No, it is never okay to ask a student to disclose his or her disability. It is a violation of the law and their rights. The best way you can assist a student with a disability is to provide their academic accommodations listed on their accommodations memo.
3. **Answer:** Absolutely not. This is a violation of the students' confidentiality and will disclose to others the fact that they have a disability. DSS recommends the first day of class that you let all students know what they should do to request accommodations – contact you and set an appointment during your office hours. You should include a statement in your syllabus directing students about what to do to request accommodations for your class. See the DSS Faculty Handbook or our website for sample syllabus statements.
4. **Answer:** No. Students with disabilities are expected to abide by the UAB Code of Conduct and your class policies just like all students. Therefore, if a student's behavior is rude, disruptive, or offensive, you do not have to tolerate that behavior. DSS recommends you treat disruptive behavior by a student with a disability as you would disruptive behavior by any other student.
5. **Answer:** Yes. Professors should always be willing to accept an accommodation letter from a student, regardless of the timing during the semester. The professor clearly did not want to allow the student to make up all the missed work; however, he wanted to consult with DSS to make sure he was handling it appropriately. Informing the student that he would get back to her was a good way to let the student know she was being heard, but it also gives the professor time to consult on the matter. Allowing a student whose missed this much class and work to attempt to make it up would be considered unreasonable. Secondly, accommodations are not retroactive. The accommodation letter should have been given at the beginning of the term.
6. **Answer:** Probably not. If the accommodation presents a fundamental change to an essential function of a course, then it is not considered reasonable. For example if time is an essential component of a skill (e.g. performing CPR), then it's not reasonable to provide extended time because it would fundamentally alter the competency. You will need to provide extended time if time is not an essential function of what is being assessed. For example, the student may come early, go through 2X, set up another time, etc.)
7. **Answer:** Yes. The professor had other options that would have been more appropriate than providing his own lecture notes. If he was unable to locate a notetaker for the student, he should have contacted DSS or informed David of the problem so he could have let DSS know so the issue could be addressed. Secondly, by providing his lecture notes, the professor is actually over-accommodating the student because the rest of the class does not have access to lecture notes.
8. **Answer:** Yes. At DSS we stress to students that they will be treated like adults and held to the same standards as all other UAB students. This includes the code of conduct and academic honor code. DSS cannot disclose if a student has a certain disability or not and a faculty member cannot ask for them to prove that they do. It's best in a situation like this to treat all students the same. Do what you would do if you caught any student cheating, disability or not, dying or not.

9. **Answer:** No. By only giving the student half of the test the professor is fundamentally altering the test which is inappropriate. Juan should have the opportunity to answer the same number and type of questions as the rest of the class. By having fewer questions, his will count more so he must answer more correctly in order to perform as well as other students. If professors experience scheduling conflicts, DSS can be contacted to assist with scheduling in our office.

10. **Answer:** No. It is unreasonable to expect the student to watch the video (especially techniques) as well as an interpreter at the same time. The professor should have chosen a video that has captioning options OR she should have contacted DSS to arrange for the video to have captioning added. DSS recommends that faculty always check to ensure their videos have captioning capability. If you create a video to be shown or have a video that needs to be captioned, contact DSS.

11. **Answer:** NO. You are not required or advised to give a student with disabilities extra time on outside assignments, unless it is provided for all other students in the class. The accommodation of extra time on out-of-class assignments is not offered because of the high risk of the student falling behind on all class work. DSS does a thorough investigation of what accommodations are appropriate for each individual and we list every accommodation that the student's disability warrants. If a student ever wants to add accommodations, it is their responsibility to contact DSS and go through the proper procedure to add accommodations.