What is EQUAL ACCESS to EDUCATION?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; states that “no otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of the handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” Compliance with this law requires that academic institutions like Indiana University Kokomo provide the same opportunity for students with disabilities to achieve success in the classroom that it provides to other students. In other words, equal access to education is achieved when physical and instructional barriers to learning are removed and the student is allowed to compete on the basis of his or her academic abilities alone. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) reinforced the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act by requiring that all public facilities, services, and communications be accessible to persons with disabilities and that auxiliary aids and services be provided unless an undue burden would result.

What is REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

Reasonable accommodation is the term used by the ADA for modifications made to the learning environment that help create equal educational opportunity. It does not require that students with disabilities be given special advantages in order to help them pass nor does it require they be graded on a scale different from their classmates. On the contrary, it refers to steps that can be taken without significant difficulty or expense to allow otherwise qualified students to fulfill course requirements by limiting as much as possible the effects of their disabilities on their performance. If reasonable accommodations are not evident, effort must be made to look for accommodations by:

- providing alternative ways to fulfill course requirements,
- developing and implementing in-innovative teaching techniques,
- providing supervised tutorial assistance and adaptive technology,
- tailoring course requirements to individual needs, and
- Modifying testing procedures to ensure measurement of a student’s abilities and not his or her disability.

Who qualifies as a DISABLED INDIVIDUAL under the LAW?

The ADA defines an individual with a disability as a person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the person, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. This definition can cover a broad range of disabilities.

What are my RESPONSIBILITIES as an INSTRUCTOR?

If a student identifies himself or herself as having a disability and requests accommodation, generally it is the instructor’s responsibility to ensure that the learning environment is accessible. Due to the very personal and private nature of some disabilities, it is important that instructors create an atmosphere where students feel comfortable about coming forward to discuss any modifications they may have. Instructors can demonstrate their openness and willingness to help students by including on their syllabi a statement encouraging students to make an appointment with the instructor, if they need course adaptations or accommodations, have any emergency medical information that the instructor should know, or need special arrangements in the event the building must be evacuated.

It is strongly recommended that the instructor make arrangements to meet with students who choose to identify themselves in order to discuss in detail the particular accommodations that will be necessary. At a minimum, an instructor should (1) make sure the student is aware of services available from the Career and Accessibility Center, (2) inquire into the extent of the disability as it relates to fulfilling course requirements, (3) discuss the possible accommodations that may be made, and (4) contact the Career and Accessibility Center if the instructor has any further questions. An instructor should also look to his or her academic department for assistance in providing accommodations. If there are any questions regarding an approved accommodation, the instructor is advised to call the Career and Accessibility Center at 765-455-9301.

What are the RESPONSIBILITIES of the DISABLED STUDENT?

Although it is an instructor’s responsibility to create an accessible learning environment, there is a point at which the responsibility shifts from the instructor to the student. Generally, a student is responsible for:

- Registering with the Career and Accessibility Center,
- Identify himself or herself as disabled,
- Ordering special materials for class such as taped or Braille textbooks or large print material through the Accessibility Center
- Identify in-class note takers; with the understanding the instructor may be able to assist them in this
- Arrange for interpreters or tape recording lectures through the Accessibility Center
- Finding, training, and employing attendants if necessary,
- Requesting special testing procedures in advance and arrange with the instructor to have a special exam taken.

Test can be taken in the testing center or an arranged place the instructor sets up.
What are some POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATIONS?

A broad range of disabilities can affect a student’s performance in the classroom. It should be remembered that each student is an expert concerning his or her own specific disability and in some cases has a lifetime of experience at creating accommodations. Communicating with the student is therefore, essential to discovering methods of accommodation. In thinking about necessary accommodations, an instructor should consider a student’s physical accessibility to the classroom as well as the student’s ability to fully participate in all course activities.

Accommodation:

- Prepare syllabus and textbook information in advance so the student can have assignments.
- Break assignments, exercises, and exams into smaller components.
- Recommend alternative methods of taking notes, eg., tape recording, photocopying, notetaker, etc.
- Provide PowerPoint’s, written copies or dated outlines of lectures.
- For written assignments or tests, allow the student to use a typewriter, computer, or tape recorder, or to dictate answers to another student. (use of a scribe)
- Encourage the use of word processors, spell checkers, and grammar checkers.
- Provide special testing conditions (extra time, room with fewer distractions, etc.).
- Recommend tutoring if the student demonstrates a need for it.

Communication is key to providing an environment where a disabled student can realize his or her academic potential. The following are some general tips for positive communication and some suggested accommodations that may be taken to reduce the effects of certain disabilities:

Students with Motor Disabilities

Communication:

- Do not provide assistance to a student in a wheelchair unless assistance is requested.
- Avoid demeaning or patronizing gestures.
- Do not lean or hang on the wheelchair as this is an invasion of personal space.
- For lengthy conversations, sit down and speak to the student at eye level.

Accommodation:

- Keep the classroom free from physical barriers and obstructions.
- Make all materials and equipment accessible before the student is called upon to use them.
- Minimize the amount of movement required to complete tasks.
- Allow for the use of adaptive tools and methods that the student finds helpful.
- Allow extra time for exams.
- In laboratory classes, allow the student to instruct his or her aid in detail for completion of the assignments.
- Give advance notice of field trips to allow the student time to plan his or her transportation.
- If the final exam is scheduled in another room, make sure that the room is handicapped accessible and make sure that the student is reminded so accommodations may be arranged if necessary.

Students with Speech Impairments

Communication:

- Speak directly to the student and not to the interpreter.
- Be attentive to gestures and facial expressions.
- Accept and respond to all attempts at communication.
- Avoid the temptation to complete words or phrases for the student.
- Acknowledge when you do not understand the student’s response and ask the student to try again.

Accommodation:

- Try to reserve front row seats for the student and the interpreter.
- Consider replacing verbal assignments with written assignments.
- Allow students who are unable to communicate orally to use a typewriter, word processor, sign board, or sign interpreter in class.
**Visually Impaired Student**

*Communication:*
- Introduce yourself and anyone else who may be present when speaking with the student.
- Do not avoid using words such as see or look with the student as blind and visually impaired persons use these words also.
- When walking with the student, allow him or her to take your arm just above the elbow. Walk in a natural manner and pace.
- When offering a seat to the student, place the student’s hand on the back or arm of the seat and allow the student to seat him or herself.
- If the student is accompanied by a guide dog, do not pet or distract the guide dog.
- Inform the student when furniture is rearranged.
- Use verbal descriptions to supplement use of visual aids.

*Accommodation:*
- Offer to seat the student close to the blackboard. This will enable him or her to see and to hear class discussions more easily.
- Offer to seat the student in appropriately lighted areas, avoiding shadows and/or glare.
- Keep pathways clear of obstructions.
- Make sure that printed material is readable, avoiding poor quality copies and illegible inks.
- Select textbooks early so the student will have time to acquire material in large print, braille, or on cassette.
- Discuss special evacuation procedures.

**Hearing Impaired Students**

*Communication:*
- Face the student when speaking.
- Speak with a clear and resonant voice.
- Avoid hand-to-face gestures that might obstruct a student’s hearing path or prevent him or her from reading lips.
- Encourage other students to be aware of those who may not be able to hear.

*Accommodation:*
- Arrange to be in a classroom with proper acoustics.
- Reduce as much as possible interfering sounds emitted from lights, vents, air conditioning units, etc.
- Close doors and windows to reduce interference from outside noise.
- Offer to seat the student close to the instructor.
- Have videos assessable outside of class if available.

**Students with Learning Disabilities**

*Communication:*
- Repeat information and/or answer questions patiently.
- Provide the student with timely feedback to correct errors as soon as possible.
- Give praise to the student when merited to build confidence.

*Accommodation:*
- Provide assistance with finding a notetaker and/or provide PowerPoint’s and lecture notes.
- Offer a seat up front.
- Offer office hours for questions.

Each student provides detailed documentation from their physician, to the Career and Accessibility Center, and is required to have an assessment appointment. Upon review of the documents, the staff will evaluate the appropriate accommodations and will provide the student with letters to give to each instructor. Each student is entitled to the reasonable accommodations that are indicated on the form. For more information or for questions regarding the approved modifications, please call the Career and Accessibility Center at 765-455-9301.
INFORMATION on SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) / Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) 
a persistent pattern of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity or both, occurring more frequently and severely than is
typical in individuals at a comparable level of development.

Aspergers Syndrome
Also known as Aspergers Disorder or Autistic Psychopathy, is a Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) characterized by
severe and sustained impairment in social interaction, development of restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests,
and activities. These characteristics result in clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas
of functioning.

Autism
a psychiatric disorder of childhood characterized by marked deficits in communication and social interaction, preoccupation
with fantasy, language impairment, and abnormal behavior, such as repetitive acts and excessive attachment to certain objects.
It is usually associated with intellectual impairment.

Cerebral Palsy
is congenital brain damage resulting in motor, sensory and perceptual difficulties. The most common functional limitations
are coordination impairments of limbs, speech and/or sight, and limitations in functional activities, especially mobility.
Accommodations should be sought according to the student's specific resulting impairment.

Cystic Fibrosis
is an inherited disease of the exocrine glands which pour secretions into or out of the body instead of into the blood. This
disease causes respiratory distress and blockage of formation of many organs. It is recommended that the instructor discuss
the nature of the student's impairment and work with him or her accordingly with respect to his or her individual condition.

Diabetes Mellitus
is a chronic disorder in which the pancreas produces an inadequate supply of insulin. This lack of insulin causes a disorder of
the metabolism that transports glucose into the cells of the body. Due to special dietary restrictions, diabetics may be required
to eat during class. If food does not correct the situation immediately, the student is experiencing "diabetic shock," and the
instructor should keep the student warm and still until medical assistance arrives.

Dyscalculia
is a learning disability characterized by severe difficulty with math. See Students with Learning Disabilities.

Dysgraphia
Is a learning disability characterized by severe difficulty with written expression. See Students with Learning Disabilities.

Dyslexia
is a learning disability which causes a student to read letters but not words or to read words but not understand them. The
most common functional limitation of this disorder is the inability to read or read at a normal rate. Students with this
condition may require more time to complete exercises. They may also require verbal instructions and examinations as
opposed to traditional written formats.

Epilepsy
Is a common seizure disorder. See Seizure Disorders.

Fatigue
is a result of many chronic medical problems including cardiac illness, respiratory illness, AIDS, and various medication side
effects. Typical signs of fatigue include chronic absenteeism, sluggish appearance, poor endurance, an inability to complete
tasks in an allotted time, confusion, or an inability to concentrate. If a student is missing class, encourage him or her to copy a
classmate's notes. If he or she is unable to take adequate notes, allow him or her to record lectures. Allow the student to
attend other sections of the course to prevent him or her from missing important material. Provide a rest period for the
student during exams.

Hypoglycemia
is a disorder which causes the body to utilize too much blood sugar, leaving a sugar deficiency which can result in fatigue,
lightheadedness, and dizziness. These effects can be controlled by monitoring activity and diet. Students with this disorder
may require sustenance and/or rest before they are able to function at their normal capacity and may also require additional
time to complete assignments and/or exams.
Multiple Sclerosis
is usually a progressive degeneration of the myelin sheath which surrounds the central nervous system. This disorder can affect sight, speech, hearing, coordination, ambulation, or general activity. When determining what accommodations are necessary, the instructor should discuss with the student the nature of the student's impairment.

Muscular Dystrophy
is usually a progressive degeneration of the body's muscle fibers which are replaced by fatty and fibrous tissue. This disorder affects strength, mobility, and physical activity. See Students with Motor Disabilities.

Paraplegia
is paralysis of the lower part of the body. The most common functional limitations are limited physical activity or ambulation. See Students with Motor Disabilities.

Quadriplegia
is total paralysis of the body from the neck down. The most common functional limitations are limited physical activity or ambulation. See Students with Motor Disabilities.

Seizure Disorders
are caused by a disturbance in the central nervous system and are sometimes marked by periods of unconsciousness, involuntary motor activity, and inappropriate behavior. The "petit mal" seizure is characterized by such subtle signs as picking at clothes, eyelid flickering, wandering around, or appearing to be in a trance state for more than few seconds. If a student reports experiencing one of these seizures, allow him or her additional time to complete the activity that has been interrupted. If the seizure is characterized by sudden loss of consciousness and rigidity, the student is experiencing a "grand mal" seizure. The duration of a grand mal seizure is usually a few minutes. During that time, the instructor should:

1. remain calm,
2. help the student safely to the floor,
3. place padding beneath his or her head,
4. tilt the student's head to release saliva,
5. remove any objects that may injure the student, and
6. cover the student, allowing the seizure to run its course.

Do not force any objects into the student's mouth or between his or her teeth.

When the seizure subsides, allow the student to rest if he or she desires. Report details of the seizure to the student after class in order to help him or her in making a report to a physician. In the event that a seizure extends beyond a few minutes, medical help should be sought for the student.

Specific Learning Disability
is a disability which affects one or more of the psychological processes involved in understanding. Specific learning disabilities can affect a student's ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, and do math. See Students with Learning Disabilities.

Spina Bifida
is a failure of the spinal column to fuse properly, leaving one or more neural elements of spinal cord unprotected. A student with this disorder may experience temporary or permanent limited physical movement or ambulation. See Students with Motor Disabilities.