Faculty and Staff Disability Access Services Training

**Introduction**

Southern Oregon University is committed to providing equal and integrated access to academic, social, cultural, housing and recreational programs for all students with disabilities

Students with one or more disabilities have the right to equal access to educational opportunities and equally effective communication. This right is provided under federal law. In some cases, in order to have equal access or effective communication, the student may need accommodation/modifications or auxiliary aids in the classroom and other areas of the campus. For purposes of this training, both accommodations/modifications and auxiliary aids are referred to as accommodations."  Universities are required to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are intended to lessen the educational impact of the individual's disability without compromising the integrity of the academic program or course. Accommodations may include instructional strategies, technology, aids and/or flexibility with policies and procedures.

While implementing reasonable accommodation(s) in the classroom is primarily the responsibility of the instructor in collaboration with Disability Resource Services, all SOU employees play a vital role in ensuring that our students have the information and resources available to them to achieve their educational goals.

**Learning Objectives**

This training will assist Southern Oregon University Faculty and staff in understanding the disability accommodation process. **All** employees at SOU play a vital role in helping to fulfill our commitment to creating an inclusive campus. The learning objectives for this course are designed to empower faculty and staff and improve the implementation of accommodations in the classroom and at the University.

By the end of this training, faculty and staff will:

1. Understand SOU's guidelines for nondiscrimination on the basis of a disability.
2. Know how to access and find resources and assistance at Disability Resources.
3. Distinguish between the responsibilities of teaching faculty, Disability Resources and students in the accommodation process.
4. Identify potential barriers on campus.
5. Be able to direct students to the appropriate resources.

If you have any questions, or need assistance while taking this course, please contact Michele Barlow, ADAC, Leaves and Accessibility Coordinator at 541 552-8119, or by email at barlowm@sou.edu.

**The Law**

There are primarily two federal laws that govern how Southern Oregon University provides accommodations to individuals with disabilities. It is important to know how these laws impact our students and to understand your role in our commitment to compliance with these laws.

It is the policy of Southern Oregon University to comply with **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**,the **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008** as well as other applicable federal and state regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Southern Oregon University's Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy [(SAD.007)](https://moodle.sou.edu/pluginfile.php/1263899/course/section/387085/SAD007-equal-opportunity-harassment-sexual-misconduct-policy.pdf) applies to all aspects of a student's post-secondary education including admissions and recruitment, academic adjustments, housing, financial aid, employment, physical education, athletics, counseling services and treatment of students in general.

Colleges and universities are required to provide equal access to individuals with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may include:

* Removing architectural, communication, or transportation barriers
* Making reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures
* Providing auxiliary aids and services

After completing this training, should you have questions about the law and how it applies to your role at the University, please contact Disability Resources (dss@sou.edu) or the Accessibility Coordinator (barlowm@sou.edu) for more information.

**Resolution Agreement**

In addition to state and federal laws on accessibility and accommodations for individuals with disabilities, on March 15, 2017 Southern Oregon University and the National Federation of the Blind entered into a resolution agreement. To resolve the concerns identified in the resolution agreement, SOU has taken the necessary steps to ensure that all SOU programs and activities are accessible to blind individuals.

The resolution agreement required SOU to do the following:

* Designate an Accessibility Coordinator and an Accessible Technology Specialist
* Adopt and/or revise policies which ensure individuals with disabilities shall not be denied services, programs or activities of SOU, or subjected to discrimination
* Develop an Accessibility Complaint Resolution Process
* Ensure that public restrooms on campus are identified by signage that includes tactile and Braille
* Provide ADA training for Students, Faculty and Staff
* Undergo a full technology audit
* Ensure that SOU's public website and SOU's web interface to student and library information systems, as well as any online forms are accessible under WCAG 2.0 AA Standards
* Ensure that course content, including co-curricular materials, electronic and information technology and online coursework is accessible

Faculty and staff wishing to view a copy of the resolution agreement may contact Michele Barlow, ADAC, Leaves and Accessibility Coordinator by phone at 541-552-8119 or by email at barlowm@sou.edu to make an appointment to view this agreement during normal business hours.

**What is a disability?**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, defines an individual with a disability as having:

* A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;
* A history or record of such an impairment;
* Being regarded as having such an impairment.

Not every disability is obvious or apparent.

Some individuals have a disability that one notices just by looking at them. Common examples of obvious or apparent disabilities are Down syndrome, paralysis, muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis.

On the other hand, some disabilities are not obvious or apparent. Learning disability and chronic illness are some examples.

There is a growing number of students with learning disabilities. Some common examples of learning disabilities are dyscalculia which affects a person's ability to understand numbers and learn math facts, dysgraphia which affects a person's motor skills and dyslexia which affects people's reading ability. Common mental disabilities include anxiety, bipolar, depression, and OCD. Chronic illnesses include HIV/AIDS, asthma and diabetes.

**Identifying Barriers**

**What are barriers?**

Nearly everyone faces hardships and difficulties at one time or another. But for people with disabilities, barriers can be more frequent and have greater impact. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes barriers as being more than just physical obstacles.

"Factors in a person's environment that, through their absence or presence, limit functioning and create disability. These Include aspects such as:

* a physical environment that is not accessible,
* lack of relevant assistive technology (assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices),
* negative attitudes of people towards disability,
* services, systems and policies that are either nonexistent or that hinder the involvement of all people with a health condition in all areas of life."

Often there are multiple barriers that can make it extremely difficult or even impossible for people with disabilities to function. Here are the six most common barriers. Often, more than one barrier occurs at a time.

**Attitudinal Barriers**

Attitudinal barriers are the most basic and contribute to other barriers. Examples of attitudinal barriers include: Stereotyping, stigma, prejudice and discrimination.

****Today, society's understanding of a disability is improving as we recognize "disability" as what occurs when a person's functional needs are not addressed in his or her physical and social environment. By not considering disability a personal deficit or shortcoming and instead thinking of it as a social responsibility in which all people can be supported to live independent and full lives. It becomes easier to recognize and address challenges that all people - including those with disabilities - experience.

*(Photo: Erik Weihenmayer, who on May 25, 2011 became the first blind person to reach the summit of Mt. Everest.)*

**Communication Barriers**

Communication barriers are experienced by people who have disabilities that affect hearing, speaking, reading, writing, and or understanding, and who use different ways to communicate than people who do not have these disabilities.  Examples of communication barriers include:

* Written messages that prevent people with vision impairments from receiving the message. For example, use of small print, no Braille or large-print versions, or electronic information that is not compatible with screen access software.
* Auditory messages that may be inaccessible to people with hearing impairments, including videos that do not including captioning, and oral communications without accompanying manual interpretation such as American Sign Language.
* The use of technical language, long sentences, and words with many syllables that may be significant barriers to understanding for people with cognitive impairments.

**Physical Barriers**

Physical barriers are structural obstacles in natural or man made environments that prevent or block mobility (moving around in the environment) or access. Examples of physical barriers include:

* Steps or curbs that block a person with mobility impairments from entering a building or using a sidewalk
* Doors that require force to open may prevent a person with limited use of upper extremities from opening the door
* Counters, desks or sinks that do not accommodate persons in a wheelchair
* Furniture or other items which may impede the path of travel for someone with a disability
* Narrow paths or hallways that do not allow for mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, or mobility scooters
* Steep grades, or slopes
* Soft or unstable surfaces

**Policy Barriers**

Policy barriers are frequently related to a lack of awareness or enforcement of existing laws and regulations that require programs to be accessible to people with disabilities. Examples of policy barriers include:

* Denying qualified individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in or benefit from programs, services or other benefits.
* Denying reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities, so that they can perform the essential functions of the job for which they have applied or have been hired to perform.

**Social Barriers**

Social barriers are related to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work and age that can contribute to decreased functioning among people with disabilities. Here are some examples of social barriers:

* People with disabilities are less likely to be employed. The unemployment rate in 2012 for people with disabilities was more than 1 in 10 (13.9%) compared to less than 1 in 10 (6.0%) for those without disabilities.*(1)*
* Adults age 25 years and older with disabilities are less likely to have completed high school compared to their peers without disabilities (23.5% compared to 11.1%).
* People with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty compared to people without disabilities (21.6% compared to 12.8%). *(2)*
* Children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than children without disabilities. *(3)*

**Transportation Barriers**

Transportation barriers are due to a lack of adequate transportation that interferes with a person's ability to be independent and to function in society. Examples of transportation barriers include:

* Lack of access to accessible or convenient transportation for people who are not able to drive because of vision or cognitive impairments, or physical disabilities.
* ****Public transportation may be unavailable or at inconvenient distances or locations.

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*(1). Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014 ;*

*(2). Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2013;*

*(3). Source: World Health Organization*

\*The content on this page is an excerpt from the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, webpage at cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability-barriers.html

**Accessibility vs. Accommodations**

What's the difference between accessibility and accommodations?

Accessibility is ***PROACTIVE****.* It means that people of all abilities have the same access, information and experience at the same time.

Accommodations are **REACTIVE**. Having to provide an alteration to a program, information or experience to someone after the fact.

Many lawsuits and settlements can be avoided by being proactive and thinking about those with disabilities while in the planning and preparation stages instead of trying to figure out an accommodation after the fact.

Accessibility is strongly related to the concept of universal design, which is the process of creating products, programs, etcetera, that are usable by people with the widest possible range of abilities, operating within the widest possible range of solutions. Universal design is about making things accessible to all people, whether they have a disability or not.

**Why is Accessibility Important?**

Did you know that many famous people had disabilities? Albert Einstein could not speak until he was three and had difficulties in mathematics. Walt Disney was diagnosed with dyslexia which affected his reading, writing and spelling abilities.

In 2016, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that the number of undergraduate students with physical and learning disabilities enrolled in American Universities had increased from 6% in 1999 to 11% in 2012.

“Accessibility” means that people with disabilities, are afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services within the same time frame as a person without a disability. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally and independently as a person without a disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates that institutions must provide equal access without undue hardship for individuals that qualify.

Providing accommodation so that students have equal access to programs and services is an important part of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as our legal requirement to do so.

Designing accessible courses is important because it provides educational opportunities to all students. For example, a captioned video is not only helpful to the deaf student, but may also benefit non-native English speakers. It also provides a sense of independence to students with disabilities. Plus, when it comes to accessibility, it is better to be proactive than reactive as you may be required to redesign majors parts of a course or assignment to make it accessible to students with disabilities.

**Your Responsibility**

Faculty and staff work with students every day and have an enormous impact on a student's experience here at SOU. Even if you are not an instructor, you may still have contact with the student population, or may notice a barrier on campus that might make it difficult for an individual with a disability to be able to navigate, or receive access to a program or event. You may also play a role in creating student facing websites, or creating forms used by students. These must be accessible as well. It's important to know your role in helping to make SOU an inclusive campus for students with disabilities.

**Disability Resources**

**Disability Resources is the primary contact for students seeking accommodation**. They provide direct services to students with disabilities, collaborate with faculty, educate the campus community, and act as a resource to all SOU staff and faculty in creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment.

Accommodations are individually determined with the student and Disability Resources in an interactive process. Some of the more common accommodations include:

* Testing accommodations
* Note-taking services
* Alternative textbook formats
* Assistive technology
* Accessible classroom seating
* Sign language interpreters/Captioning
* Priority Registration

**Faculty**

Faculty and Instructors collaborate with Disability Resources and students to provide equivalent access in the educational environment. Faculty responsibilities are:

* Syllabus statement - Ensure that the syllabus statement regarding disabilities is included on every syllabus for every class, including reading it aloud in the introductory session.
* Refer students to Disability Resources.
* Keep disability-related discussions and information confidential.
* Provide accommodations in collaboration with the student and Disability Resources.
* Work with Disability Resources to provide students alternative format materials (e.g. textbooks, handouts etc.) in a timely manner.
* Ensure that publications used for class have alternate options available for students with sight impairments.
* Ensure that course content conforms to applicable accessibility standards.
* Do not provide disability-related accommodations to a student who does not provide an accommodation request letter.
* Treat students with disabilities as equitably as you would any other student.
* Contact the Disability Resources Coordinator immediately if you have concerns that a requested accommodation would comprise a fundamental alteration to the course or program of study.

The Disability Resources Faculty and Staff webpage provides valuable resources and tools for working with disabled students, guidance on text conversion services, using closed captioning, accommodated testing, alternate format materials, technology for students with disabilities, sign language, service animals and other resources. All SOU faculty and staff are encouraged to review the information on this [webpage](https://inside.sou.edu/dr/facstaffhome.html).

**Students**

Disclose the need for accommodations, contact Disability Resources to schedule an initial appointment, complete the online application for accommodations, provide information regarding the functional limitations of disability and any requested documentation to Disability Resource Services and comply with policies and procedures.

**Accessibility Coordinator**

Coordinates with Disability Resources to oversee SOU's compliance with National Federation of the Blind's resolution agreement with respect to digital and non-digital-technology requirements.  Assists in the development of policies and initiatives. Informs the SOU Executive of the existence, status and outcome of all accessibility complaints. Conducts annual Faculty and Staff Disability Access Services Training.

**Office of Diversity and Inclusion**

Provides oversight for the university regarding civil rights compliance. This includes formal grievances, education and practice.

**Human Resource Services**

Works with employees with disabilities who request reasonable accommodation to help them perform the essential functions of their job. Employees with disabilities who need accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of their job should contact Human Resources Services to engage in the interactive process. You can view the Reasonable Accommodation Procedure for employees [here.](https://moodle.sou.edu/pluginfile.php/1264997/mod_lesson/page_contents/2045/ReasonableAccommodationProcedure-2.docx)

**Staff**

Ensure that the services and information you provide are accessible to all persons, regardless of disability. This includes making sure websites and documents are accessible. Report any physical barriers on campus to Disability Resources, Facilities Management, Campus Public Safety, Accessibility Coordinator or SOU Cares Report. If you are in charge of scheduling events or meeting on campus, be sure to include the following statement on all program/event publicity: "If you need disability accommodations to participate in this event, please contact Disability Resources at (541)552-6213 or dss@sou.edu."

SOU's commitment to ensuring equal opportunity to access its programs, services and activities, takes a combined effort and commitment from all of it's staff.

**"Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."** - ***Vince Lombardi***

**The Accommodation Process**

**How do students request accommodation?**

Students seeking accommodations should contact  Disability Resources and complete the online application for accommodations. Students will be asked to provide information regarding the functional limitations of their disability. This may include information provided directly by the student, observation by/interaction with Disability Resources' staff and/or documentation from an appropriate clinician, depending on the nature of the disability.

If a student with a disability is approved for accommodations, the instructor will receive an Accommodation Letter indicating what specific accommodations the student will need in class. We will cover the Accommodation Letter later in this training course.

Certain accommodations may require a discussion and/or written agreement between the instructor and the student. It is the student's responsibility to contact their instructor.

Confidentiality is critical throughout the accommodation process. Instructors should note the students name, but never share it in class and should not ask the student about their accommodation in class. The student's right to privacy and confidentiality should be respected and discussions of student's disability or accommodations should be limited to private conversations. It is the student's decision whether to share specifics about his/her disability.

Students who are utilizing Disability Resource Services have the right to confidentiality, but not necessarily anonymity. Information concerning a student with a disability should only be disclosed to those with a legitimate need to know. Please do not discuss a student's disability or need for accommodations in front of other students.

**Overview**

**Student Responsibilities**

 Students who wish to receive accommodations must:

* Register with Disability Resource Services.
* Provide documentation of a disability to support the requested accommodations (unless the disability is obvious and apparent).
* Meet with Disability Resources staff for orientation and accommodation discussion.

**Reviewing documentation of a disability is the responsibility of Disability Resources**. Instructors should not be involved in the documentation process nor should they have access to any confidential medical or psychological information.

**Faculty Responsibilities**

Faculty play a key role in making sure accommodations approved by Disability Resources can be implemented in a timely manner.

* Please ensure that your course materials are accessible to students with disabilities.
* Develop your course to be inclusive of multiple learning styles.
* Read the emails regarding the student and their accommodations very carefully.
* Work with Disability Resources to provide accommodations.
* Respect the student's privacy and confidentiality.

If a student brings documentation (medical information) to you, please refer them to Disability Resources. Collection and review of documentation of a disability is the responsibility of Disability Resources.

If a student discloses a disability, please refer the student directly to Disability Resources. If you suspect a disability based on inconsistent academic performance, please refer your students to Disability Resources for consultation.

**Confidentiality**

Any information you receive regarding a student's connection to Disability Resource Services, their disability, and their accommodations is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

Successful implementation of accommodations requires faculty, students and staff to work together in a respectful and collaborative manner. Accommodations should never be discussed in front of other students and a student should not be singled out during class. Any discussion with the student regarding accommodation should be conducted in private during office hours, outside of the classroom setting. While some disabilities may be obvious and apparent (wheelchair users, blind student using a service animal or white cane, or deaf student using a sign language interpreter) other disabilities may not be visible.

Keep in mind that discussing disability, even a potential disability, may be a very sensitive subject. Choose a time and place for the discussion that protects the student's right to privacy.

**Preparation**

**Syllabus**

Your syllabus provides the foundation for your course and creates an agreement between you and your students. Please be sure that your syllabus contains the statement below and bring the statement to the attention of your students at the first class meeting.

*"If you are in need of support because of a documented disability (whether it be learning, mobility, psychiatric, health-related, or sensory) you may be eligible for academic or other accommodations through Disability resources. Call Academic Support Programs at (541) 552-6213 to schedule an intake appointment with Disability Resources. The Academic Support Program office is located in the Stevenson Union, lower level. See the Disability Resources webpage at www.sou.edu/dr for more information."*

Let your students know that accommodation needs can be discussed during your office hours. Please do not mention any student by name or point out specific students with disabilities in your class.

**Planning Ahead**

Planning ahead for your course activities and resources, like captioning all media prior to the start of the term, means the class can run smoothly. All students need equivalent access to class content.

* Please plan ahead and submit all media requiring captioning and/or audio description to Disability Resources at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the term.
* When adopting course curricular materials (including textbooks, handouts, online modules, etc.), look for materials that are already accessible for people with disabilities.
* Ensure that all materials you prepare are accessible. Speak to the student directly whether or not a transcriber or interpreter is present.
* Remember that information regarding accommodation is confidential and should never be discussed in class.
* If you have questions about classroom accommodations, Disability Resources is happy to assist you.

Do you have questions about general etiquette and behavior when working with students? Visit the Faculty and Staff Information tab on the Disability Resources webpage for best practices and resources.

**Web Accessibility**

Academia increasingly relies on the use of the Web for research, study and interaction. For some students with disabilities, the Web and its quickly-broadening range of associated applications can create barriers to that information. Part of preparation should include how courses and materials will be provided through digital formats.

Essentially, Web accessibility means ensuring that your entire audience can perceive, understand and use the Web and its related information and technologies, regardless of disability. This may require the use of assistive technology.

Looking at some examples:

* Blindness makes it impossible to view a standard screen display or printed output. A person who is blind often will use a speech output system (e.g., screen reader) or refreshable Braille to read text that is presented on the screen.
* People who are blind cannot view the graphical features of a web site. You need to include text equivalents or text alternative to make the content in the graphical features accessible.
* Individuals with vision loss, including hazy vision, low vision color blindness, tunnel vision and near sightedness may have challenges with low or poor color contrasts, small icons and type faces. They may need large monitors, anti-glare screens, magnification software, and color and contrast adjustments.
* Use of color alone to convey information will be unusable for a person with these disabilities.
* Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals may not be able to hear audible material, including computer prompts. They will also need closed captioning for videos.
* Wheelchair users may need adaptive computer stations.
* Physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, stroke, muscular dystrophy, may provide difficulty for individuals with these conditions to use a keyboard or they may find it impossible to use a mouse, and will need to rely on the keyboard for Web browsing.

Currently, SOU's student population includes over 450 students that have registered with Disability Resources as having one or more disabilities. This translates to around 6% of the student population, making the students with disabilities subgroup larger than any student ethnic subgroup. By comparison, 18.1% of the general population in the United States has a disability. (2002 SIPP, U.S. Census Bureau).

There are some simple reasons to ensure equal access to Web information for students with disabilities:

1. **It's the right thing to do.** Each student with a disability has paid tuition and works towards the same degree expectations as any other student of SOU. We, as faculty and staff, may need to make adjustments in how we deliver our programs, classes and services in order to provide equivalent content to our students with disabilities.
2. **It's the legal thing to do.** As a public university, SOU must comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) that states: "Subject to the provisions of this title, no qualified individual with a disability shall by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity." {SEC.202. Discrimination, 42 US 12132}

While Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires colleges and universities to provide students with disabilities equal and integrated access to their programs, benefits, and services, it is the **World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA.** and **Section 508 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Final Standards and Guidelines** that provide technical guidance for web-based information. WCAG 2.0AA has been accepted throughout the web industry and is used by the Department of Justice within settlement agreements as providing for full and equal access in accordance with federal law.

SOU's Information Technology department offers Web Accessibility training to all faculty and staff to ensure that webpage content is accessible to those students with disabilities. In addition, the office of Disability Resources offers quick guides and resources on creating accessible PDF's, PowerPoint Presentations and other formats of presentation materials.

You may view both IT and Disability Resources webpages at inside.sou.edu for more information about web accessibility guidelines.

**The Accommodation Letter**

Each student with a documented disability meets with a specialist in the Disability Resources office who, in consultation with the student, clarifies the student's disability-related needs and determines which accommodations and services are most likely to allow the student equal access to the educational environment.

Once this process is completed, Disability Resources generates an Accommodation Letter. The Accommodation Letter gives faculty members specific information about the classroom accommodations for which the student is eligible. The student will then request that the Accommodation letter is sent to their instructors via the online accommodation system (AIMS). It is SOU's policy that accommodations cannot be made retroactively, and that accommodations cannot start until the instructor has received the accommodation letter. Instructors are not required to provide accommodations for students without such notification.

Once the instructor has received the Accommodation Letter, they will work with Disability Resources in fulfilling the accommodations requested. Successful implementation of accommodations requires collaboration between the student, faculty member and Disability Resources. Faculty members are encouraged to seek assistance from Disability Resources if they have any questions or concerns about the Accommodation Letter or if they need any tools or training to help them fulfill the students accommodation requirements.

**Accommodations**

An accommodation includes actions to eliminate or reduce physical or instructional barriers to learning. Accommodations are individualized to a student's needs, which can include physical accessibility and participation in course activities.

Accommodations and modifications are reasonable unless they:

* Alter or remove essential requirements.
* Fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity.
* Impose undue financial or administrative burden.
* Pose a threat to others.

The determination that an accommodation or inclusion is unreasonable is an institutional decision that must meet legal and educational requirements. Though the academic judgements involved in such decisions are typically the prerogative of the academic unit involved, those judgements must be made within legal parameters. Therefore, such determinations require collaboration between faculty, the academic department and Disability Resources. Faculty members may not unilaterally determine that an accommodation is unreasonable.

**Accommodation Dispute**

Faculty members who believe that a requested accommodation is unreasonable should consult with Disability Resources. You may also contact the office of Diversity and Inclusion for assistance in analyzing a request for accommodations. Unless there is an appreciable threat to the safety of the student with a disability or others, the student should be allowed to proceed under the proposed accommodation until the matter is resolved.

**Extensions**

Sometimes a student's accommodations will indicate reasonable extension of attendance and/or deadlines due to a medical condition. This accommodation is given for very specific circumstances in which the student has a condition that is chronic but unpredictable. Examples include treatment for cancer, bipolar disorder, Crohn's disease and seizure disorders. This accommodation is provided because students with these conditions cannot anticipate when an episode or flare-up may occur.

Class attendance and assignment policies are not determined by Disability Resources. The number of allowable absences depends on the interactive or participatory nature of a course, or is based on department, college or accrediting agency rules. Therefore, attendance policies are set by faculty at the college or departmental level.

**Extension of Attendance and Deadlines (Assignment)**

If attendance is determined to be essential, then students need to work with the instructor to determine the maximum time that can be missed without compromising the integrity of the course/program. In most cases, the instruction will require a minimum of 70% class attendance. However, depending on the nature of the class (labs, graduate level, group projects, etc.) the instructor may require 80% to 90% class attendance.

Similarly, the instructor determines policies regarding make-up work and missed quizzes and exams. The instructor is not required to lower or substantially modify essential course elements in order to provide an accommodation.

The student will meet with the instructor and complete the extension agreement(s) together. The student should not incur any late grading penalties if work is submitted by the revised due date.

**Essential Requirements of the Course**

It is the responsibility of instructors to understand and articulate the essential requirements of their course. There may be times an instructor believes an accommodation creates a fundamental alteration of the course or program. Before a determination can be made whether an accommodation fundamentally alters a course or program, faculty must first be able to:

* List educational objectives for the course, lab class, clinical rotation, site placement and/or program.
* Identify accreditation or licensure requirements for the course or program.
* List skills and knowledge students must learn and list how to measure the outcomes/performance for each course, lab class, clinical rotation, site placement and/or program.
* List the activities (projects, papers, presentations, skill demonstration, etc.) that will occur to facilitate these objectives and acquisition of the skills and knowledge in the course, lab class, clinical rotation, site placement and/or program.
* List skills, knowledge and other criteria students must have prior to this course, lab, clinical rotation, site placement or program (prerequisites).

The decision to deny an accommodation should not be taken lightly. Highly respected institutions have found themselves in serious legal jeopardy for devoting insufficient thought to the conclusion that a requested accommodation should be denied. By addressing the above items and documenting the process, instructors can establish that they have thoroughly evaluated the course/program objectives and the impact of a recommended accommodation. It is important to realize that failure to provide a reasonable accommodation to a student with a disability is a violation of law that could result in a loss of all federal funding to the institution.

**Denials & Grievance Policies**

In the event that Disability Resources is unable to resolve a student's request for accommodation, Disability Resources shall self-report to the Accessibility Coordinator within two (2) business days of the failure to resolve the student's complaint.

Student's wishing to file a complaint on the decision by Disability Resources may submit written request for review to the Accessibility Coordinator.

This process is designed to address disputes concerning the following:

1. Disagreements regarding a requested service, accommodation, or modification of a University practice or requirement:
2. Inaccessibility of a program or activity;
3. Harassment or discrimination on the basis of a disability;
4. Violation of privacy in the context of disability.

Complaints under this policy must be filed within 180 days of the denial of services, accommodations or alleged discrimination. Southern Oregon University may consider an extension where a delay is due to circumstances beyond a student's control such as illness or incapacity.

Consistent with applicable law, Southern Oregon University prohibits retaliation against any person who requests an accommodation, files a complaint alleging disability discrimination or participates in the grievance process. Any concerns about retaliation related to this process should be disclosed to the Accessibility Coordinator.

While students are encouraged to utilize SOU's Accessibility Complaint Resolution Process towards resolving disability related complaints, all students have a right to file a complaint under the University's policy on Nondiscrimination, to the Office of Civil Rights and to the Department of Justice.

**Looking To the Future**

As student needs evolve, and with ever changing technology, Southern Oregon University will continue to grow in our commitment to provide full and equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities who are otherwise qualified, to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy all the programs and services of the University.

In addition, SOU commits to implementing accessibility of Electronic Information Technology (EIT) and shall advise all EIT vendors of our commitment to  EIT that complies with the WCAG 2.0 AA standards.

SOU will continue to provide ongoing training for all staff and faculty who need assistance in creating accessible forms, documents and webpages.

Your role is vital in ensuring our compliance with state and federal laws.

To accompany this training, please review the following documents:

* FERPA Summary
* Student Accommodation Request and Grievance Policy and Procedure
* Section 504 Fact Sheet
* Overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act