Teaching Assistants
GUIDE

To Effective and Reasonable Accommodations
Teaching and Working
with College Students
with Disabilities
A NOTE TO TA’S

Please refer to the ADAPTS – Disability Services Program website at: www.adapts.gatech.edu to view the full version of the Faculty & Administrative Guide to effective and reasonable accommodations for more detailed information.
ATTITUDINAL BEHAVIORS

As members of the academic community, you are very much aware of the impact language has on the reader or listener. Therefore, it is very important to be aware of and apply the appropriate terminology when describing people with disabilities.

Defining a person by the disability, not the person’s humanness, leads us to isolate and segregate people with disabilities. It also hurts their pride and damages their confidence. Unfounded or inappropriate attitudes can be more disabling than any diagnosed disability.

Stereotyping prevails on campus, as it does in the larger society. In college, though, it not only perpetuates the prejudicial treatment encountered by people with disabilities elsewhere, but it may undermine scholastic performance or access to educational opportunities. Stereotyping also reinforces barriers that students with disabilities are trying to overcome at critical junctures in their lives.

Revising our perceptions and attitudes is the first step in accommodating students with disabilities. It is vital to remember that similarities among all students are much more significant than their differences: they are all, first and foremost, students.

The most important thing to remember is to put the person before the disability. This puts the emphasis on the person and not his or her particular functional limitation. If you must be succinct, give an accurate and positive portrayal of the person. Crippled, deformed, suffers from, victim of, the retarded, etc. are never acceptable terms.

Disability groups also strongly object to euphemisms to describe disabilities. Terms such as handicapable, mentally different, physically inconvenienced, and physically challenged are considered condescending. They reinforce the idea that disabilities cannot be dealt with up front.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Terminology</th>
<th>Inappropriate Terminology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person who is deaf</td>
<td>The deaf person</td>
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<tr>
<td>People who are visually impaired</td>
<td>The blind person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a disability</td>
<td>A disabled person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had/has polio</td>
<td>Polio victim</td>
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<tr>
<td>A person without a disability</td>
<td>Normal, able-bodied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who has a mental illness</td>
<td>A mentally ill person, crazy</td>
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</table>
The following definitions may help clarify which terminology to use:

**Disability:** general term used for a functional limitation that interferes with a person’s ability, for example, to walk, lift, hear, or learn. It may refer to a physical, mental, or sensory condition. Use a descriptive noun or adjective, such as persons who are mentally and physically disabled or a woman with a disability.

**Handicap:** not a synonym for disability. It describes a condition or barriers imposed by society, the environment, or by one’s own self. Handicap can be used when citing laws and situations but should not be used to describe a disability. For example, the stairs are a handicap to her.

**Non-disabled:** appropriate term for people without disabilities. Normal, able-bodied, healthy, or whole are inappropriate.

In addition to inappropriate language, certain myths about persons with disabilities also need to be dispelled. Listed below are some examples of myths regarding persons with disabilities.

**Myth: Disability is a constant, frustrating tragedy. People with disabilities are courageous, brave and inspirational by being able to overcome their disability.** Disability is an inconvenience. Most people with disabilities do not dwell on their impairments, but rather carry on their lives as normally as they can.

**Myth: Disabled people want to be with “their own kind.”** For years people with disabilities were seen together because they attended segregated school and had separate accessible facilities. They naturally socialized with people they met in these settings. Now, with their integration into society at large, people with disabilities choose friends and companions with common interests like the rest of us.

**Myth: We should not award a degree to a student with a learning disability if he or she has difficulty reading.** Quality universities have been awarding degrees for years to students who have difficulty reading. Some of these students are blind. Others have learning or other disabilities. Some very successful people who had little ability to read were Winston Churchill, Agatha Christie, Hans Christian Anderson, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, George Patton, and Woodrow Wilson.
REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973
Section 504
Federal Register/Vol. 45,
No. 92, pp. 30937-30944

Section 504 is designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. It provides that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives or benefits from federal financial assistance. “Persons with disabilities” means any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Admissions and Recruitment

Qualified persons with disabilities may not, on the basis of disability, be denied admission or be subjected to discrimination in admission or recruitment. Institutions may not make pre-admission inquiry as to whether an applicant for admission is a person with a disability. After admission, the university may make inquiries on a confidential basis as to disabilities that may require accommodation.

Academic Adjustments

Universities shall make such modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability, against a qualified applicant or student with a disability. Academic requirements that the recipient cannot demonstrate that are essential to the program of instruction being pursued by such student or to any directly related licensing requirement will not be regarded as discriminatory within the meaning of this section. Modifications may include changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree requirements and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted. Universities shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no student with a disability is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in or otherwise subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by the school because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

All questions relating to students with disabilities are to be referred to the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program, Suite 210 Smithgall Student Services Building, 404-894-2564, 404-894-1664 (TDD).
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) OF 1990 & 2008

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990. The ADA was followed by its amendments in 2008. This act protects millions of Americans with disabling conditions from discriminatory practices in public accommodations (including colleges and universities), employment, transportation and telecommunications.

The ADA extends the coverage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA protects every person who either has, used to have or is treated as having a physical or mental disability which substantially limits one or more major life activity. Individuals who have serious contagious and noncontagious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, or epilepsy are covered under the auspices of the ADA.

Employment

State University System institutions, as employers of students, faculty and staff may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabling conditions and must reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applicants or employees unless undue hardship would result.

Public Education

State University System institutions may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabling conditions by excluding them from participating in or denying them the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university.

Public Accommodations

Public facilities of State University System institutions, including student unions, museums, athletic arenas, auditoriums, libraries, recreational facilities, etc., must be accessible to individuals with disabling conditions.

Telecommunications

Telecommunication relay for hearing and speech impaired persons must be provided.

Miscellaneous

The ADA prohibits either coercing or threatening or retaliating against the disabled or those attempting to aid people with disabilities in asserting their rights under the ADA.
FACULTY PROCEDURES

ADAPTS-Disability Services Program
The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program, located in the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS), provides students with information and support regarding students with disabilities. Assistance is also available for meeting the requirements of ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program assists students self-identifying as having a disability. Official documentation of disability is required to determine eligibility for accommodations or adaptations that may be helpful on campus.

Staff members in the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program serve as full-time advocates for students with disabilities. Their role is to ensure that all students have physical and programmatic access to all college programs, thereby enhancing their interactions in all activities of the campus community.

The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program office organizational chart below:

Assistant Dean of Students/
Director of Disability Services

Admin. Professional

Disability Services Coordinator
(Full-Time)

Disability Services Coordinator
(Part-time)

Testing Center Assistant

Procedures for Providing Accommodations
Any student whom is requesting accommodations as a result of a disability should be referred to the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program. Once referred, the staff in the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program will work with that student to arrange for appropriate accommodations. The student will then receive an accommodation letter detailing their necessary accommodations and should make arrangements to meet with each instructor, bringing with them a letter from the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program detailing the identified accommodations. Should there be
any discrepancies with the letter, a call should be placed to the author. (See page 18 for a sample accommodation letter.)

Equal Opportunity and Fairness

The issue of fairness and classroom accommodation is often raised. Classroom accommodations provide an opportunity to students with disabilities to compete on equal ground with the other students in the class. Accommodations for students with disabilities are a civil right and are protected by federal law. Accommodations are prescribed on an individual basis based on the students need and the disability documentation through the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program; they are never frivolous or arbitrary. Accommodations ensure students complete access to and full participation in the educational process and require no adjustments to the evaluation of academic performance. Rather, accommodations allow a student with a disability to truly learn the material presented and for an instructor to fairly evaluate the student’s understanding of the course.

Documentation

All students with disabilities are required to provide appropriate documentation of his/her disability to the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program. At no time is a student required to provide documentation to any other administrator, dean, or professor. Verification of a disability may be obtained by contacting the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program, 404-894-2564. The right to privacy and the sensitive nature of this issue are protected by not releasing the specific disability in the accommodation letter provided by the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program. It is only necessary for the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program to have this information in order to approve specific accommodations. The accommodation letter serves as the student’s official institute documentation that they are eligible students with a disability and therefore entitled to effective and reasonable accommodation. If at any time there are questions about any student with a disability in your class, you are encouraged to discuss your questions with the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program. All questions should be directed to the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program and not to the student.

Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation in the classroom is an individual civil right guaranteed by federal legislation (ADA and Section 504). Once the accommodations are identified, they must be provided to the student. Many accommodations are easily administered. If assistance is needed, contact the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program at 404-894-2564; the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program will make the accommodation process simple and effective for both the student and the faculty member. For more information regarding the student’s responsibility, see page 9.
FACULTY PROCEDURES (cont.)

Common Accommodations (but not limited to)
- Priority seating in the classroom,
- Faculty member standing facing the class while speaking,
- Audio recording of lectures,
- Use of sign language interpreters,
- Change of classroom location,
- Extended time for exams and quizzes,
- Reduced course load,
- Alternative test formats,
- Advanced copy of syllabus,
- Alternative testing sites,
- Flexible attendance policies,
- Assistance in identifying note takers, Readers,
- Use of computers in taking exams,
- Enlarged print on exam questions or lecture notes, and
- Providing copies of lecture notes in electronic format

Failure to Accommodate

The accommodations outlined in the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program letter are not optional and must be provided under two federal pieces of legislation (ADA and Section 504). When accommodation specific questions arise, it is the responsibility of the faculty or staff member to contact the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program, 404-894-2564, to discuss questions.

Confidentiality

It is the policy of the Federal Government (see section on ADA of 1990), the Georgia Institute of Technology, and the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program that persons with disabilities are not to be discriminated upon this factor. The confidentiality of a person with a disability is also covered by this antidiscrimination clause and must be abided to at all time. The student is not required to show documentation of their disability to any person or office at Georgia Tech other than the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program. The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program retains the students file and determines the student’s accommodations with respect to their individual disability and need. A student is not to be asked about the specifics of their disability nor is their disability to be shared with anyone other than those needing to accommodate the student.
SAMPLE ACCOMMODATION LETTER

Services for Students with Disabilities
Faculty Accommodation Form

Student Name: George P. Burdell
Student ID#: 987-65-4321

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the following student has presented documentation of a specific disability. The accommodations below are needed for this student. This information is CONFIDENTIAL and should be discussed privately between you and the student. To insure ADA mandated confidentiality, do not discuss/refer to a student’s disability in front of others.

It is the student’s responsibility to request accommodations, and it is our responsibility to provide them. You are a key part to this process. Should examinations be proctored by the ADAPTS office, the student will make an appointment to discuss proper arrangements with you. Also, the appropriate accommodations for this student will have a typed X, please do not accept any hand written remarks. If you have further questions or concerns, please call my office or reference our website at http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/. Thank you for your assistance.

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS:
( ) Permission to tape lectures ( ) Use of notetaker or lab assistant ( ) Overhead outlines
( ) Permission to use laptop computer ( ) Front row seating ( ) Other: ______________________

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS:
( ) Quiet, non-distracting test environment ( ) Extended time on exams/quizzes (amount of extension)
( ) Altered exam format ( ) Large print on exam ( ) Reader/Taped exam
( ) Permission to use computer and/or Adaptive Technology ( ) Other: __________________________

2000 SPRING SEMESTER SCHEDULE
Course Section # Instructor’s Signature
_________________________________________ ________________________________
_________________________________________ ________________________________
_________________________________________ ________________________________
_________________________________________ ________________________________

The instructor’s signature is needed so we can make sure that the student has made you aware of the accommodations that they will be needing throughout the quarter.

Student Signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________________

***I hereby give permission for the ADAPTS office to discuss my situation with appropriate institute officials.

__________________________________________
Assistant Dean of Students/Coordinator of Disability Service
ADAPTS PROCEDURES

Testing Procedure

Professors required to provide testing accommodations to their students with disabilities should have received an ADAPTS-Disability Services Program accommodation letter from the student near the start of the semester. The letter should state the student’s accommodations, including amount of extended time. Professors may give the exams to the students, provided that the accommodations are met (i.e., if the student requires a quiet, non-distracting environment). Professors, and often students, utilize the testing facilities in the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program. The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program ice requires students to sign up for their exam, date and time, in advance. The professor is responsible for getting the exam to the office prior to the student taking the exam. The exam may be faxed, e-mailed, walked over, or given to the student with the disability in a sealed envelope. **However, the preferred method is for the exam to be hand delivered by the instructor or responsible party to Room 210.** The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program places the student in a testing room, makes sure the student has only the required materials with them in the room, and monitors their time. The exam is then sealed with an official ADAPTS-Disability Services Program sticker and returned to the office or mailbox specified by the professor as soon as possible. All exams that were proctored through the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program are sealed upon their exit; please contact the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program as soon as possible if you receive an unsealed exam.

ADAPTS-Disability Services Program
221 Smithgall Student Services Bldg
404-894-2563 (voice)
404-894-1664 (TTY)
404-894-9928 (fax)
www.adapts.gatech.edu
PHOTO INDEX

The following offices are available to assist you as you teach students with disabilities. Do not hesitate to contact any of these offices should you have questions about students with disabilities. If you need assistance, and the appropriate contact is not listed, feel free to call the ADAPTS Office for referral to the correct office.

On Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Area Code 404</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADAPTS-Disability Services Program</td>
<td>894-2563 (V), 894-1664 (TDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Assistive Technology &amp; Environment Access</td>
<td>894-4960 (V/TDD), 894-2575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Center</td>
<td>894-6367</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean of Students Office</td>
<td>894-1420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Health Center</td>
<td>894-2470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>894-4528 (V), 894-0230 (TDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Retrieval Service</td>
<td>894-4575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Human Resources</td>
<td>894-4847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>894-9645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>894-2500 (V/TDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stingerette Bus Service</td>
<td>385-7433</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice President for Student Affairs</td>
<td>385-8772</td>
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Off Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Area Code 404</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADA Southeastern Technical Assistance</td>
<td>404-888-0022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHEAD (Association of Higher Education and Disability) (V/TDD)</td>
<td>614-468-4972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural Transportation and Barriers Access Board</td>
<td>800-872-2253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Academy for the Blind</td>
<td>912-751-6083</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia Board of Regents</td>
<td>404-656-2250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia Department of Education</td>
<td>404-656-4689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Relay Service</td>
<td>800-255-0056 (V), 800-255-0056 (TDD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Sensory Rehabilitation Center</td>
<td>404-669-9007 (V), 404-669-0150 (TTY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia VocRehab Agency</td>
<td>404-657-3053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEATH Resource Center (Higher Education and Adult)</td>
<td>202-939-9320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for Individuals with Disabilities</td>
<td>212-545-7510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Center for Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>404-331-2986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Civil Rights (OCR) US Department of Education</td>
<td>800-855-1155 (TDD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operator Services for the Deaf (OSD)</td>
<td>800-221-0877</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic</td>
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL COURSES

Make an announcement such as this at the first meeting of the class: “Any student who feels that he/she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours.” This approach preserves students’ privacy and also indicates the willingness of the faculty member to provide assistance as needed.

Confidentiality of all disability information is essential. At no time should the class be informed that a student has a disability, except at the student’s express request. All disability information which the student gives to the faculty member is to be used specifically for arranging reasonable accommodations for the course of study.

- Provide students with a detailed course syllabus which is available before registration.
- If possible, select a textbook with an accompanying study guide for optional student use.
- Clearly spell out expectations at the beginning of the course (e.g., grading, material to be covered, due dates).
- Announce reading assignments well in advance for students who are using taped materials or other alternative formats. It takes an average of six weeks to get a book tape-recorded.
- Start each lecture with an outline of material to be covered that period. At the conclusion of class, briefly summarize key points.
- Speak directly to students, and use gestures and natural expressions to convey further meaning.
- Present new or technical vocabulary on the blackboard or use a handout. Terms should be used in context to convey greater meaning.
- Give assignments both orally and in written form to avoid confusion.
- Facilitate use of tape recorders for note taking by allowing students to tape lectures.
- Provide adequate opportunities for questions and answers, including review sessions.
- Provide study questions for exams that demonstrate the format of the test, as well as study questions on content. Explain what constitutes a good answer and why.
- Allow students with disabilities requiring alternate testing formats to demonstrate mastery of course material using methods appropriate to the student and the subject matter (e.g., extended time limits for testing, taped exams, individually proctored exams in a separate room).
- Permit use of simple calculators, scratch paper, and spellers’ dictionaries during exams.
- Encourage students to use campus support services.