

Access & Ability Services - FAQs

Creating Accessible Learning Environments

Below are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that will help facilitate a smooth transition between the student with disabilities, the instructor, and the Office of Access & Ability Services (AAS).

How can I let students in my class know that I am approachable and willing to make accommodations for disabilities?

One of the easiest and most effective things that an instructor can do is to include a statement on the syllabus that invites students with disabilities to contact the instructor and/or the AAS Coordinator. The current statement reads:

Students requiring assistance or academic accommodations for a disability, please contact me after class, during my office hours, or by individual appointment. You must have established your eligibility for support services through the Office of Access & Ability Services (AAS) located in 304 Founders Hall or call the Coordinator, Mrs. Gretchen Woods at, 573-681-5162.

Will having a student with a disability make my job more difficult?

The Office of Access & Ability Services works closely with students and faculty to make the process of arranging classroom and testing modifications as easy as possible for everyone. After meeting with the AAS Coordinator to determine reasonable accommodations, students will provide their instructor's with a Letter of Accommodations (LOA) from the AAS Coordinator. The LOA identifies the student as having a disability and classroom and or course accommodations are listed. The LOA must be signed by the AAS Coordinator. If you have any questions or concerns about a student's accommodations, please call our office at 573-681-5162 and ask to speak with the Coordinator, Mrs. Gretchen Woods.

How can I ensure that a person with a visual impairment will have access to all of the materials in my classroom?

A student with a visual impairment will bring you a LOA listing accommodations that will provide him/her with access to classroom materials. Be sure to discuss these accommodations with the student to learn more about how s/he will best be able to access printed matter.

Enlarged print can be prepared easily enough by changing the font size on any document. Instructors who have preplanned lectures and know with some degree of precision what work they will be putting on the board during each class session may prepare copies of the board work on plain paper and give them to the student at the beginning of class. Overheads can be copied on any copy machine. Board work and PowerPoints may also be provided to all students, regardless of disability status. The AAS Coordinator works with Missouri Assistive Technology to secure information and or materials to support the visually impaired. It is always appropriate to notify AAS as soon as possible to discuss student needs. Students using alternate texts need to have access to class materials at the same time as their peers. Conversion can be a time-consuming process; therefore, it is critical that you choose the textbooks for your courses well before the start of the semester.

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When Students Disclose Disabilities

What should I do when a student brings me a LOA from AAS?

A student's LOA identifies him/her as a student with disability who is entitled to receive specific modifications to the classroom and/or testing environment. The LOA also provides instructions for arranging each of the student's accommodations, or for referring the student to AAS for certain test modifications that instructors are not expected to provide. The AAS Staff Contact listed on the memo LOA is the best person to speak with about any questions or concerns.

AAS coordinators instruct each student receiving LOA to contact his/her instructors early in the semester. The student should arrange an individual meeting with each instructor in order to discuss the accommodations listed in the LOA and how they should be implemented. By the end of this conversation, both of you should understand what your responsibilities are and (if applicable) how test accommodations are to be arranged. If a student attempts to give you a LOA immediately before or after class, or at another time when you are unable to have such a discussion, inform the student that s/he must make an appointment to meet with you privately and talk about the LOA before you are able to make any accommodations.

The AAS LOA doesn't tell me what the student's disability is. Why not, and what am I entitled to know?

All information regarding a student's disability is highly confidential. Only the student may decide whether to disclose his/her diagnosis to anyone. Some students choose to have their LOAs include certain limited information regarding the nature and impact of their disabilities, but most do not. You are free to discuss accommodations and modifications with students, but should not ask any student for information about his/her disability other than what is listed on the LOA.

Does TAs have the authorization to make test modifications?

Unless a listed modification alters something essential to the course, each modification must be provided. If you are unsure whether you are authorized by your department to arrange these accommodations, or do not know how to do so, contact your supervisor immediately.

Can I limit the period of time in which I will allow students to bring me LOAs from AAS?

Instructors cannot set a time limit for disclosure and students cannot be refused accommodation if they do not distribute their LOA within a certain timeframe. Our office encourages students to bring LOA to all of their instructors for classes in which they wish to be accommodated during the first two weeks of the semester. Early notification means that accommodations will be in place for the majority of the semester and also makes it easier for you to make these arrangements. Unfortunately, this is not always possible, as students are sometimes diagnosed partway through the semester.

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You are, however, entitled to receive adequate advance notice from the student that modifications will be needed. AAS generally interprets “adequate” to mean one to two weeks prior to a test. If a student provides you with an LOA less than one week prior to a previously announced test date, please contact AAS as soon as possible.

What if a student claims to have a disability but does not have an LOA from AAS?

You should arrange disability modifications only for students who provide them with an LOA from AAS. The university requires students to establish eligibility for disability assistance before they may be accommodated. AAS is the office designated to collect and maintain confidential disability materials and to coordinate accommodations for students. No legal difficulties will be incurred by informing a student that s/he must provide an AAS LOA in order to be accommodated.

If a student brings an instructor the documentation of a disabling condition, the instructor should recommend the student contact AAS. It is important that the student be informed that our office exists and is established to assist in all matters of disability.

Excuses for ordinary medical absences do not constitute disability documentation except under very unique circumstances. In these cases, the student will have an AAS LOA indicating that s/he is subject to disability related absences.

What is a disability?

any impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and / or functions

has record of such impairment,

(record such as past history with substance abuse or mental illness)

or

regarded as having such an impairment

(regarded: treated as if, ex. facial tics, facial scars, severe burns, etc.)

What if a student has not disclosed it, but I suspect that s/he has a disability?

You should be aware that a student who has not been diagnosed may not be receptive to being perceived as having a disability. It is also possible that the student has been diagnosed already, but has chosen not to disclose that s/he has a disability and/or to register with AAS because the student does not feel that s/he needs academic modifications. If you feel strongly about broaching the subject with this student, arrange to discuss it privately. You may inform him/her that Lincoln offers a variety of academically supportive resources through Student Support Services, In this context, it would be appropriate to include a mention of AAS services.

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Who is responsible for administering exams to AAS students who are eligible for accommodations?

Due to the very limited space available to the Office of Access & Ability Services (AAS) we rely on instructors to provide simple test modifications as described below. If the student requires more complex accommodations, students may be referred to AAS for administration of the test.

What types of accommodation are instructors expected to provide?

Instructors should arrange test accommodations for students with one or more of the following listed on the LOA:

50% extended time (time and one half)

A quiet, monitored test setting that is free from interruption, with only a small group of students.

Use of a simple calculator

Enlarged print tests

Permission to record answers directly on a copy of the test instead of onto a Scantron answer sheet

Provide a written copy of orally administered instructions given prior to testing

Exam questions read to the students

Consultation regarding student progress

What is the first step in arranging these modifications?

The student will bring you a LOA from our office explaining the modifications to which s/he is entitled.

At this time, you should discuss how test accommodations for the course will fit into the student's schedule. It is important that students not miss one class to receive their testing accommodations for another. AAS recommends that you and the student decide on arrangements for all remaining tests at this meeting, and schedule them if possible.

What other considerations must be made when arranging modified testing?

Instructors should keep the following questions in mind when making exam arrangements for students:

Does the student's schedule allow him/her to begin the test at the same time as the rest of the class and receive extended time?

If not, can the student begin earlier than the rest of the class and complete the test at the same time as everyone else?

If not, is it possible for the student to schedule the test at an alternate time on the test date? Should you have concerns about the integrity of the test, you might consider having the student sign an honor statement not to share information with others in the class.

If the student has no time available to take the test on the day it is scheduled, you will have to set this up for another day and time.

The AAS has a copy of each student's class schedule and can determine when it is impossible to take an exam on the test day. No time is specific to class or work schedules. It is best practice to provide the

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accommodation of setting an alternative testing day. As a general rule, the exam must be completed during the same week and before grades are posted.

What constitutes a quiet setting that is free from interruption?

A quiet test setting has fewer distractions than the usual classroom. The AAS has two quiet rooms and access to a classroom where students may come to take exams in setting with fewer distractions. The student is responsible for requesting their exam be sent to AAS and for scheduling an appointment with AAS to take the exam on a given date and specific time.

Why can't students take an exam with extended time in the regular classroom, if their accommodations do not include an alternate test setting?

It is a student's right not to have his/her disability disclosed to anyone, including other students. If a student is already taking a test when others arrive in the room, or if a student stays behind after everyone else has finished their tests, which will raise questions among the rest of the class. It would also be very distracting for the student to have so many people entering or leaving the room while s/he is trying to work and being asked to take a break during this time may disrupt the student's concentration.

Additionally, the room in which the entire class takes the test may not be available before or after the exam period for the student to have his/her extended time. It is inappropriate and unnecessarily disruptive for a student to begin a test in one location and be relocated to another in order to complete a test.

- Are there any cases in which students will test with AAS?
Yes, examples may include: 100% extended time (double time)
- a private, proctored setting
- a test reader, adaptive software, or an audiotaped version of the exam
- a word processor for essay exams
- a scribe to record exam answers

What do I need to do if I am sending a student to test with AAS?

You and the student share responsibility for making these arrangements.

It is up to the student to inform you that s/he wishes to use AAS test accommodations for an exam. You should then talk with the student about when s/he will be able to take the test. If the student is unable to take the test at the same time as the rest of the class, you will need to give him/her permission to take it at another time, or perhaps even on another day.

During your discussion with the student, you will need to complete and sign an [Exam Request Form](#). This form is located on the LU website under Access & Ability Services and in the AAS office. It is very important that you fill out the entire request form, as this is your means of communicating your

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test instructions to AAS. The Exam Request form can be sent electronically or hand delivered to 304 Founders Hall 24 hours prior to the scheduled exam date.

Please Note: AAS will follow your instructions on the request form to the letter. It will be very important to include information specific to:

- the amount of extended time
- the date the exam must be taken, when given an alternate date, the date the exam must be completed by is required
- what, if any, additional materials are allowed (ex. calculators, formula sheets, note cards, scrap paper, etc.)
- AAS will notify you via e-mail whenever a student has completed his / her exam or when the student does not come in to take the exam at the scheduled time.

Next, the student must schedule an appointment with the AAS office admin or Coordinator. Due to our limited test space and small staff, AAS requires 24 hour notice to ensure that a student will receive all of his/her accommodations for a test. Final exams must be scheduled two weeks in advance.

How will I know if the exam arrangements have been made?

When the arrangement between instructor and student is made to use the AAS office as an alternate testing site, both have 24 hours prior to the exam to communicate with the AAS office. The student schedules the exam with the AAS office admin. The instructor submits and the Exam Request Form. If the student schedules an exam and we have no corresponding exam 24 hours before the scheduled time, the instructor will receive an email from the AAS office admin.

My tests will be given in the evening. Will AAS be able to proctor tests after 5pm?

Our testing hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm. We suggest that for tests given after 5:00pm, you allow the student to take the test earlier. Permission to do so may be marked in the appropriate place on the Exam Request Form. If you choose not to allow the student to take the test during AAS hours of operation, you will be responsible for making appropriate exam arrangements for that student.

What if I am not comfortable letting my students begin the exam earlier than the rest of the class?

We suggest that you discuss with student options including taking the test later or on an alternate day.

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Class Notes

A student brought me an LOA from the AAS office which lists copies of class notes as an accommodation. How do I set this up?

The AAS will be seeking students to volunteer as note takers. We ask for your assistance as well by asking for volunteers in your class.

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The goal of this accommodation is to ensure that students have notes comparable to what he/she would take if the disability did not interfere with note taking. To facilitate this process, please assist the student by doing one of the following:

If you are posting notes in Canvas, please clarify for the student whether these are complete study notes.

If you are not able to directly provide the student with complete study notes, please assist them in obtaining copies of notes from a classmate. Make an announcement in class requesting a volunteer note taker or by posting an announcement to Canvas. Please do not reveal the name of the student with a disability. You can simply say, “there is a student with a disability in the class that needs a note taking assistant; will someone please volunteer to share their notes with this student?” When a volunteer is identified, please give the AAS student the name and contact information for the volunteer. If the student has requested anonymity please refer the volunteer note-taker to the AAS office.

If you do not get a volunteer on the first try, please make one more in-class announcement. If no one volunteers, please inform the student.

To check the quality of peer supplied notes, the student may request that they be examined by the instructor.

If you have any questions, contact AAS.

I use Power Point presentations in class. Can I just give the student my slides?

Yes, provided they are comprehensive. For example, if you leave blanks on the slides for students to fill in, they may still request additional copies of notes from a volunteer if they are unable to keep up with the lecture and note-taking during class. You may want to email your Power Point slides or make them available to the student online before class, so the student will have the opportunity to review them ahead of time and be able to fill in their notes during the class lecture without rushing.

My notes are messy, my lectures are unpredictable, and/or my classes are driven by discussion. How should I go about providing note-taking assistance?

You should solicit a volunteer note taker from the class. You can do this by making a general announcement to the class that a student (do not give the name of the AAS student) needs a back-up set of notes. You may also post an announcement in Canvas. Use your best judgment in selecting a volunteer note-taker.

I think it’s important for students to gain the skills involved in taking notes. Do I have to provide this accommodation if I don’t feel comfortable doing so?

Yes. Students are determined to be eligible for this academic adjustment in an effort to offset the effects of a disabling condition. To disallow the use of this service would create an inaccessible classroom. If you have further questions, please contact the AAS Coordinator.

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It's time-consuming for me to make a copy of my lecture notes just for one student. Is there an easier way to do this?

We encourage you to provide notes for all of your students. A current trend in education is to move away from an accommodative approach to disability and toward a universal design for instruction. Providing notes to all students (through an online class site, for example) reduces the need to accommodate individual needs and makes the class content more accessible to all students.

Does a student with this accommodation receive notes even if they don't go to class?

No. Note-taking assistance is not a substitute for class attendance. Volunteer note-takers and faculty are instructed not to provide notes when students do not attend class.

Isn't it a violation of copyright law for a student to tape record my lectures?

No. It is legal for a student to tape record a lecture as an alternate method of accessing the class content. If you have concerns about how the material will be used after it is recorded, please contact the AAS Coordinator. At your request, the student recording your lectures can sign a privacy statement.

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Disability and Academic Standards: Keeping them Compatible

Should I reduce my expectations of someone with a disability? Do I need to grade the student differently?

All AAS students have met the admissions standards set by Lincoln University and deserve the opportunity to do their best. As with other students on this campus, some will be successful and some will not.

The accommodations and academic modifications recommended in each student's LOA have been determined by staff in AAS and are based on documented limitations of disability. They are designed to counter the effects of disabilities where they may pose a barrier to the education process; as such, they will not give any student an advantage over others.

Will I need to change the way I prepare or administer tests, or the way I enforce deadlines and attendance policies?

A student with a disability should be expected to do all essential work in any class, with reasonable and appropriate accommodation. In general, AAS does not ask instructors to alter test format or material for students with disabilities. Students who require the use of adaptive software, test readers, or scribes during tests should be referred to the AAS office, as instructors are not expected to make such arrangements themselves.

Some students will need reasonable extension of assignment due dates and reasonable allowance of absence for disability-related reasons. Others may require large-print handouts, closed captioning for

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videos, or other classroom modifications. If a student is entitled to such accommodations, that will be listed and explained in his/her LOA. Please contact the AAS Office at 681-5162 for further information.

What does “essential work” entail?

“Essential work” refers to work that is directly related to the defined academic purpose or purposes of the course, or to the mastery of key competencies being taught in your class.

Whether to provide substitutions or waivers of such work is an academic decision; however, AAS reserves the right and has the responsibility to discuss these matters with you, just as you have the right and responsibility to discuss recommended accommodations with us.

Attendance is essential in my course, but a student just brought me a LOA stating that s/he is entitled to be absent. What does this mean?

AAS policy is never to recommend unlimited absences for any course. Some students, however, require consideration of reasonable flexibility in attendance and participation policies. What is reasonable will vary, depending on the course and the student’s disability. If you see a modification related to attendance or participation on a student’s LOA, please call AAS at 681-5162 for further information.

A student is not doing well in my class. S/he is telling me that the accommodations are not working and that several additional modifications must be made. I am uncomfortable with the suggested modifications. What do I do now?

If the modifications that the student is requesting are listed on the LOA, they must be provided. If you have questions or are unsure of how to make these arrangements, please contact AAS as soon as possible.

If the student is asking for something not included on the LOA, please refer him/her to AAS.

It’s past mid-term and a student who is doing poorly in class has just brought me a LOA requesting additional time on tests. The student says that I will have to re-administer all previous tests from this semester so that they are accommodated for disability and can improve their grade. Must I do this?

No. Academic adjustments cannot be retroactive. Accommodations begin when you are notified by the student. You will be responsible for providing accommodations on all remaining tests in the semester.