

**WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES**

144 Killian Annex ■ Cullowhee, NC 28723

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disabilityservices.wcu.edu



HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

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Dr. Lance Alexis; Director
Office of Disability Services
Western Carolina University
144 Killian Annex
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Dear Fellow Catamount,

Thank you for choosing Western Carolina University. We look forward to being a part of your collegiate experience. This handbook is made available to help explain how enrollment in the Office of Disability Services can assist you in achieving your goals while attending Western Carolina University.

The office is here to assist individuals with documented disabilities and medical conditions in gaining equal access to all aspects of campus life. We are the campus professionals who have specialized knowledge and experience in disability issues. The Office of Disability Services is the central location for reviewing and maintaining documentation, determining reasonable accommodations, implementing accommodations, organizing and arranging awareness activities, advising other departments on accessibility, and researching and purchasing assistive technology.

This handbook contains an outline of services available and strategies for accessing those services. Please feel free to speak to either member of our staff regarding any questions you might have. I can be reached at 828-227-2716 and Angie Song at 828-227-2780.

Sincerely,

Lance Alexis

Early Registration

Students fully enrolled with ODS will be allowed priority registration. By registering for classes as early as possible, you will enable ODS to provide you with the best possible services.

Faculty Accommodation Letter

At your request, ODS will provide a letter for you to take to your instructors explaining the accommodations you will need in class. Take time with each instructor to allow him/her the opportunity to read your accommodation letter and to allow time for you to answer any questions he/she may have. Furthermore, meeting with the instructor may allow you to establish rapport which most likely could prove to be beneficial as your college career progresses.

Test Proctoring Procedure

If an instructor is unable to provide testing accommodations, ODS is pleased to proctor the tests. In order to provide this service in a responsible fashion, certain procedures must be followed. Students will be informed of the procedures during the meeting where reasonable accommodations are established.

Requesting Proctoring

- At least 3 business days prior to the test, the student must submit a test proctoring request located at the following link: <http://www.wcu.edu/28501.asp>
- After receiving the request, the student will be sent the following email:
 - Thank you for submitting a test proctoring request. We will inform your instructor and will email you when everything is finalized.
- Upon receiving the email, ODS will notify the instructor of the request via email:
 - John/Jane Doe in your MATH 123 course has made a request that his/her test on DATE at TIME be proctored by the Office of Disability Services. Please access the following link to a test information form: <http://www.wcu.edu/28501.asp>
 - If date and time or any other information is inaccurate, the instructor may respond to the email or call ODS to help clarify (828-227-2716).

- The instructor must submit the form at least 1 business day prior to the test.
- Once notification from the instructor is received, ODS will send the instructor an email:
 - Thank you for submitting a test information form. We will process the request and contact you if any questions arise.
- The student will then be sent an email:
 - Your instructor has submitted the information necessary for us to proctor your test. See you soon.

3 Business Days—Student Proctoring Request

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|
| Test On | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Inform ODS By | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Monday | Tuesday |

1 Business Day—Instructor Test Information

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|---------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Test On | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Submit Form By | Friday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday |

Proctoring

- Before a student begins, one of the office’s quiet testing areas is made ready by clearing space, powering on a surveillance camera, and ensuring that appropriate resources are available e.g. computer (internet disabled), scribe, or reader.
- The student is asked to surrender any unnecessary items e.g. cell phone
- The student is escorted to the testing area, brings all necessary materials, settles in, and receives the test.
- When the student finishes the test or time elapses, it is collected.
- The student claims his/her possessions and leaves the office

- The instructor will receive the following email:
 - John/Jane Doe has completed your exam, and it will be delivered in the method indicated on the submitted test information form.
- Upon delivery, a signature will be requested to confirm receipt and documentation of receipt will be maintained by ODS.

Tests Late In The Business Day

- ODS is housed in Killian Annex, and the building closes at 5:00 p.m.
- For any test that falls outside of regular business hours, please allow the student to take the test at an alternate time if possible.
- If it is not possible, ODS will attempt to make alternate arrangements, and more than the minimum notification would be appreciated.

Quizzes

- ODS is happy to proctor quizzes when necessary and the same procedure should be followed.
 - The element of surprise means pop quizzes cannot be proctored, so accommodations must be provided by the instructor

If the Request Process is Not Followed

- If a student fails to notify ODS of the test in the 3 business day time frame, he/she will receive the following email:
 - Thank you for submitting a test proctoring request. Unfortunately we cannot process your request because all test proctoring requests must be submitted at least 3 business days prior to the test date. Attend your class as usual, and the instructor is not required to provide the accommodations. Please make future requests in the appropriate timeframe.
- The instructor will then receive the following email:
 - John/Jane Doe in your MATH 123 course made a request that his/her test on DATE at TIME be proctored by the Office of Disability Services.

Unfortunately he/she did not provide adequate notice, so we are unable to provide the service. If you are unable to provide the accommodation during the test, you are not obligated to do so. Please encourage him/her to make requests in a reasonable time frame in the future.

- If the instructor fails to give sufficient notice, he/she will receive the following email:
 - Thank you for submitting a test information form. Unfortunately we cannot process your request because all test information forms must be submitted at least 1 business day prior to the test. The student must receive the accommodations stated in the accommodation letter, so you will be responsible for providing them. Please make future submissions in the appropriate timeframe.
- The student will then receive the following email:
 - Unfortunately your instructor did not appropriately submit the information for the test. Please attend your class as usual keeping in mind that you are still eligible for your accommodations and it is the instructor's responsibility to provide them for this upcoming test. For future tests, please follow the same procedure.
- If notification of an upcoming test or quiz is not provided to students by the instructor 3 business days or more prior to the test, the instructor is required to provide the accommodations.
- A test may be rescheduled with written verification from the instructor
- The Office of Disability Services appreciates everyone's efforts in this process. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Lance Alexis @ 828-227-2716 or lalexis@wcu.edu

Note taker Services

In an effort to increase self advocacy among Western's students, ODS calls on students who request and qualify for note taking services to be proactive in the pursuit of locating a note taker. In the event that a student does not feel comfortable asking someone in class, please refer to the following procedure:

After giving the instructor an accommodation letter stating that note taking is a necessary accommodation, the student should ask the instructor to announce at the next class meeting that a note taker is needed for a student in the class. It is up to the student to decide whether to permit the instructor to use his/her name.

If the student permits the instructor to use his/her name, the student can meet with the volunteer after class to make necessary arrangements. If the student does not want the instructor to use his/her name, the student may ask the instructor to request contact information from the volunteer and then give that contact information to the student at a later time.

If no volunteer comes forth, please inform ODS as soon as possible so alternate measures may be taken.

ODS will provide note taking/carbon paper if requested, which will make the process of transferring notes easier and offers the note taker free paper for his/her notes as well. We will also make photocopies of notes free of charge. Note takers may also count their service as 3 hours of community service through the Center for Service Learning.

Interpreter/Transcribing Services

During the initial intake interview, the need for interpreting/transcribing services will be discussed. If needed, an interpreter/transcriber will be assigned to each of your classes. On occasion, ODS may be unable to find a qualified interpreter/transcriber for a specific class at a specific time. If this occurs, you will be notified immediately and given the opportunity to change the class to another time or choose a different class when an interpreter/transcriber is available.

Any changes such as a room change, day, or time change either temporarily or permanently must be communicated to ODS immediately to ensure that services are not delayed.

If you know you will miss a class, give ODS and your classroom interpreter(s) at least 24 hours advance notice. Failure to provide at least 24 hours notice is considered a "No-Show." To give advance notice you may:

- Call the ODS (828-227-3886) and either speak with someone or leave a message by voice or relay,
- Send an e-mail message to the Director (lalexis@wcu.edu) or his assistant (awsong@wcu.edu), as well as to the assigned interpreter/transcriber.

Three “No-Shows” for the same assignment in one semester will result in a required meeting with the Director and implementation of an agreement.

Once a student has missed three classes within one semester, the student must contact ODS staff 30 minutes prior to the start of that class/assignment each day in order to be provided an interpreter/transcriber. Please keep in mind that interpreters/transcribers may be reassigned and services may not be available.

The agreement will be in effect even if notification has not been sent or received. For this reason, students are encouraged to keep track of the number of classes missed per semester.

If a student is late for a class, the interpreter/transcriber will wait 25% of the total scheduled assignment (i.e., 15 minutes for a 50 minute class; 20 minutes for a 75 minute class) up to a maximum of 30 minutes. For late arrivals, observing the wait length begins at the schedule for the class to begin. The interpreter will wait outside of the classroom. If the student has not arrived after the indicated wait time, the interpreter/transcriber will contact ODS, informing the office of the “no show” and then leave. Students are requested to inform the office as soon as possible if they are running late, preferably by calling the scheduler AND the ODS office. This will allow the office to notify the interpreter/transcriber to wait outside the classroom until the student arrives.

If you arrive in class before the interpreter leaves, do not ask the interpreter what you missed. It is your responsibility to ask your instructor, note taker, or other students what you missed, either after class or during break.

If you need to talk to the instructor or other students after class, ask the interpreter if she/he is available. If she/he is not, you will need to set up an appointment and request an interpreter from the Director.

You are responsible for all course content, tests, and other course requirements. The interpreter is not responsible for the grades you receive. Please direct all questions regarding course material and context to the instructor. The interpreter will not be able to provide course information, tutoring, or any form of instruction; the interpreter’s/transcriber’s role is to facilitate communication.

If communication problems occur or you are having other problems with your interpreter, discuss those issues directly with your interpreter. Do not discuss these problems with your friends or with other interpreters. If the problem cannot be solved, contact the Director. He will be available to discuss options for resolving the issue and to facilitate a meeting between you and the interpreter/transcriber should the need

arise. If the problem is related to skill level on the part of the interpreter, all attempts will be made to replace the interpreter. If a qualified interpreter is not available at the time of the class, the student may be asked to change to a different class when a qualified interpreter can be hired to interpret. However, if the problem is related to personality conflicts, all steps will be taken to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of both parties but a replacement interpreter may not be hired. If the problem continues and cannot be resolved, the Director will need sufficient time to find a suitable replacement.

You will be asked to fill out an evaluation providing feedback regarding your interpreter(s) at least two times each semester. Please help us maintain top quality services by providing your input. However, if you are experiencing problems or have any concerns, please feel free to make an appointment to meet with the Director immediately. If interpreting services are needed for any college-related events other than the regular class schedule, complete a Request for an Interpreter (available at ODS). Your request will be delivered to both the director and the coordinator; one of them will confirm receipt of your request within 24 hours. If you do not receive verification, please contact the office immediately. Requests should be made at least two weeks before services are needed, though last-minute requests will be accepted and all attempts will be made to provide services.

Interpreters will not be placed in assignments that could compromise their commitment to the Code of Professional Conduct. In such situations, the deaf person's right to privacy and confidentiality could easily be compromised. Any questions regarding ethical issues should be directed to the Director.

ODS supports student's in Interpreter Education Programs by allowing them to observe classroom interpreters as part of their mentoring, practicum, or intern experience. You have no responsibility to a mentee, practicum student, or intern who may be observing the interpreter in your class. Mentoring, practicum, and intern students are required to follow all aspects of the WCU Interpreter Policy and the RID Code of Professional Conduct.

Alternate Format Textbooks & Equipment

ODS can provide books on CD or MP3 if such provisions have been made for you in your letter of accommodation. Our process for transferring textbooks to alternate files is as follows:

Our first resource for audio files is Learning Ally. If the book needed is not available, or if the student prefers a pdf file on CD, we will request the book directly from the

publisher. If a pdf file is not available from the publisher, we will proceed to provide alternate format “in-house”. This simply means that we will ask that you leave your book with our office and after the print shop has “cut” your book (removed the binding) we will scan the book and create a pdf file on CD. These files can be accessed easily with any screen reader, most of which are free to download. Books will be returned to you with a spiral binding.

If necessary, a selection of assistive equipment is also available on loan from our office. We have digital recorders, Learning Ally CD players and MP3 players available. You will be asked to sign an “Assistive Technology User Contract” for all equipment on loan, as well as an “Electronic Text User Contract” for all books created in house.

Student Responsibilities:

- Provide documentation of your disability to ODS.
- Complete the intake process with the Director.
- Discuss services needed with the Director.
- Be on time for all classes, labs, and meetings.
- Take care of and return Assistive Listening Devices, transcribing equipment, or other equipment borrowed from the ODS office in a respectful and timely manner; report all damages or loss of equipment immediately to ODS. Do your best to protect the longevity of all equipment; understanding that you may be held liable for deliberate or reckless damage to equipment.
- Give the faculty accommodation letter to the instructor in a timely manner.
- Discuss any problems with your note taker directly; report any persistent problems to the Director.
- Be responsible and respectful in your actions regarding services.
- Know and abide by all WCU and ODS policies, rules and regulations.
- Be an active team player in the provision and use of services.
- Ask questions should you be unsure of procedures or policies.

Each student must take the initiative to familiarize him/herself with these policies, rules and regulations (Failure to do so will not exclude you from any consequence of violating any WCU or ODS policy, rule or regulation.)

ODS Responsibilities:

- Maintain confidentiality of all information submitted to the office; release information on a need to know basis with written consent of the individual.
- Assist students in gaining equal access to all WCU services, classes and events.
- Continue to enhance services and access to programs.

- Assist students in completing the ODS intake process and accessing appropriate services.
- Help students determine which support services are appropriate and explain how these services will be provided.
- Maintain documentation of disability and other written records.
- Assist faculty and staff members in working with students.
- Provide advocacy and support to students when working with instructors.
- Provide students with a faculty accommodation letter to give their instructors.
- Refer students to other services on campus when necessary (e.g., Student Support Services, Counseling and Career Planning Services).
- Follow all laws that apply to serving students on a college campus.
- Treat each individual requesting services as an individual with respect and dignity

Interpreter/Transcriber Responsibilities:

- Follow the RID Code of Professional Conduct. When necessary per university policies, interpreters/transcribers may communicate typically confidential work-related information with appropriate administrators and Director of ODS.
- Interpret/Transcribe lectures, discussions, movies, and all asides in the classroom setting to best of their ability.
- Keep all information regarding assignments confidential.
- Facilitate communication between persons who are hearing and persons who are deaf or hard of hearing as accurately as possible.
- Show up on time for assignments.
- Be professional in all aspects of the assignment.
- Dress appropriately. Interpreters should wear clothes that contrast with skin color and are not distracting to the student.
- Prepare for class by reviewing textbooks, handouts, and movies ahead of time.
- Wait 25% past the scheduled class time before leaving should the student not be present.
- Contact the Director if you have comments or concerns.
- Treat each individual requesting accommodations/services as an individual with respect and dignity.

Faculty Responsibilities:

- Maintain the academic standards of the College.
- Identify and establish the skills and knowledge that are fundamental and essential components to their academic courses/program and to evaluate each student's performance on this basis.

- Maintain the confidentiality of disability-related information and communication unless otherwise given written consent or authorized by the student.
- Acknowledge and provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities in a timely manner. This includes providing accommodations themselves or by making arrangements with the Director.
- Arrange with students the means for providing accommodations in their course.
- Discuss with the Director any concerns related to accommodations, modifications, and/or auxiliary aids requested by students.
- Obtain from the Director any necessary clarifications concerning policies and procedures for requesting and securing accommodations and/or auxiliary aids.
- Provide equal access to classroom resources and exams at a comparable level as provided to any student in his/her class.
- Facilitate exam and quiz logistics in a timely manner to ensure that all tests are administered in a standard and proper fashion. Faculty determines the testing conditions under which the exam or quiz is to be administered (i.e.: closed book, use of a calculator, etc.)
- Treat each individual requesting services with respect and dignity.

Note: Faculty may refuse to provide accommodations for students with disabilities who have not followed Western Carolina University Office of Disabilities Services policies and procedures for participating in the accommodation process.