

## **Working with Students with Disabilities in Online Courses**

Office of Accessibility Resources

As online courses increase, so too will the number of students with disabilities enrolling in them. For most of these students, the appeal of online courses is the same as it is for any other student, but for some there is an added benefit. These courses can be an excellent way for students to avoid disability-related barriers that make it difficult or even impossible for them to function successfully in courses that are offered in the college classroom. The vast majority of these students will need no accommodations at all, because the nature of online courses will allow them to circumvent the problems they would ordinarily encounter. Others will need some minor considerations. However, there are design elements you may choose to employ that could create new and at times insurmountable barriers to access. Please contact Tamara Mariotti to ensure that your entire course is accessible to individuals with disabilities and that it complies fully with federal regulations regarding accessible web content.

The accommodation process will for the most part parallel that which occurs when the student is physically present in the college classroom, with the primary difference being the medium in which our communication takes place.

Please use the following procedure when working with students in the online environment:

**1. Include this statement about self-identification and accommodation in your course syllabus:**

*I would appreciate hearing from anyone in the class who has any type of disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) which may require some special accommodation. Please email me so that we can discuss your needs. Before services can begin, you must also contact the Office of Accessibility Resources, 315-792-5644, in Room 104H of the Payne Hall Building on the Utica Campus. **(For the Rome Campus, students should contact Salina Doherty, or the Student Services office, PC 102G, 315-334-7709).** Staff members will review your documentation, determine your eligibility for accommodations, and decide what those accommodations will be. Students who notified me regarding accommodation needs in a previous semester must do so again each subsequent semester*

Please note MVCC video compliance procedure:

<https://www.mvcc.edu/accessibility-resources/mvcc-video-compliance-procedure>

**In the classroom, captioning will be required when a student has self-identified as being hearing impaired through the Office of Accessibility Resources. If captioning is not available, appropriate accommodations will be made or the video will not be used.**

2. Devise a system whereby students must acknowledge/confirm that they read and understood the above statements.
3. When students self-identify, respond to them via e-mail with a cc to the Office of Accessibility Resources, saying that you are happy to accommodate students with disabilities once you receive information from the Office of Accessibility Resources that verifies the disability and states their accommodation needs.
4. The Office of Accessibility Resources will acknowledge your e-mail (using "reply all"), and then communicate separately with students, discussing specifics about the disability, requesting and reviewing documentation, and considering the appropriate accommodations. Updates regarding the status of this process will be sent to the professor as necessary.

5. Office of Accessibility Resources will e-mail the usual Accommodation Plan to the professor (with a copy to the student). Any additional information or explanations will accompany the form.
6. When extended time testing is the appropriate accommodation, the Office of Accessibility Resources representative will advise the professor and student regarding how much additional time should be given. Students should be told at this time what the penalty will be for exceeding that time limit; this penalty should be the same as it is for students without disabilities who exceed the allotted time.
7. In hybrid online courses, tests that are taken online will follow the online course procedures. Tests that are taken on campus will follow on-campus procedures.
8. In the case of tests that the student will be taking on campus with the Office of Accessibility Resources, the student must follow the usual office procedures. He or she must contact the Office of Accessibility Resources at least 3 days before the test for tests during the semester and at least one week in advance for finals. This should be done via a phone call to (315) 792-5644.
9. Don't accept vague statements about disabilities or accommodation needs from students ("I might need a little extra time."), and don't make any of your own. Make it clear that you are more than willing to discuss and attempt to meet student needs but that you cannot do so without detailed information and specific requests for assistance or accommodations, channeled through the Office of Accessibility Resources.
10. Save copies of all written correspondence and take and keep notes on all conversations you have with students related to their disabilities.
11. Contact an Office of Accessibility Resources staff member if you have any questions or concerns.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Coordinator of Accessibility Resources:

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Accommodative Specialist

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Rome Temporary Accommodations Specialist

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PC 102G, Rome Campus  
[sdoherty@mvcc.edu](mailto:sdoherty@mvcc.edu)

Secure Test email: [oar@mvcc.edu](mailto:oar@mvcc.edu)

**Please send your tests to this email and not individual staff emails.**