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# “Attitudes Are The Real Disabilities”

## Mission and Goals

Baruch is committed to making individuals with disabilities full participants in its programs, services and activities through compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the American with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. It is the policy of Baruch College that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall be denied access to or participation in any program, service or activity offered by the universities. Individuals with disabilities have a right to request accommodations.

### **Our core values are to:**

- Treat students as dignified individuals with rights and responsibilities
- Empower students to manage their own accommodations to the greatest extent possible
- Make information available so students can make informed choices
- Provide reasonable accommodations without lowering standards or changing the essential nature of a course or program
- Seek to provide quality services in an efficient, effective, timely and professional manner



## Services for Students with Disabilities

If you have a physical, psychological or learning disability, Baruch College provides services through the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD), a division of the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### **The office provides:**

- Federal mandate 504 & Americans with Disabilities advocacy
- Advocacy: an active process designed to make Baruch College's systems more responsive to the needs of each individual served by the system
- Modifications to academic requirements as necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate against students with disabilities or have the effect of excluding students solely on the basis of a disability
- Assistive Technology Services
- Reasonable modifications for exams
- Provision of auxiliary aids: readers, writers, interpreters, note takers, science laboratory assistants, etc.
- Print materials available in alternate formats
- Room changes as needed for accessibility
- Priority registration
- Counseling for issues related to disability
- Pre- admission interviews and orientation coordination
- Outside referrals
- Tours as needed
- Liaison with vocational rehabilitation
- Temporary Disability Assistance

## Determination of Reasonable Accommodations

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, activity or facility that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to similarly situated students without disabilities. The university is obligated to provide accommodations only to the known limitations of an otherwise qualified disabled student. To determine reasonable accommodations, the Director or Assistant Director of OSSD usually seeks information from appropriate service faculty and personnel regarding essential standards for courses, programs, services and activities.



### Reasonable Accommodations are determined by examining:

- Appropriate and current (3-5 years) documentation from a licensed professional (i.e. psychiatrist, psychologist, medical doctor, neurologist)
- The barriers resulting from the interaction between the documented disability and the campus environment
- The possible accommodations that might remove the barriers
- Whether or not the student has access to the course, program, services, activity or facility without an accommodation
- Whether or not essential elements of the course, program, service, activity or facility are compromised by the accommodations

### Accommodation Request Analysis

**In reviewing accommodation requests, the following analysis is used:**

1. Does the student have a disability?
2. Is the student “otherwise qualified”?
3. Was the request submitted in a manner consistent with established university policies and procedures?

4. Is the request reasonable and/or readily achievable?
5. Is the nature of the program or activity fundamentally altered by the provision of the accommodation?
6. Does the provision of the accommodation present an undue financial or administrative burden on the university?

## Procedures for Obtaining your Accommodations

### Accommodations in the classroom

If you require accommodations in the classroom and have already established these accommodations through an intake with the Director or Assistant Director of OSSD, you can pick up your memos for your professors in our reception area. If you need to clarify or change accommodations, please see the Director or Assistant Director. Having a disability that is invisible makes it tempting not to identify yourself to your professors. Remember, the accommodations you receive do not reflect your ability.

It is best if your professor can administer your exam with the accommodations listed. However, if this is not possible, and you need the office's assistance in administering exams with accommodations, please **be sure** to follow the **Testing Accommodations Guidelines/ Contract handout (see page 13)**, which is available in our reception area. Once the accommodations have been determined, Evelyn Morales or Harriet Baer, can discuss with you the procedures for taking exams in our office. On a final note, it is best if you speak to your professors regarding your accommodations within the first two weeks of classes.

### Auxiliary Aids and Auxiliary Aid Personnel

If you require the use of auxiliary aids and/or assistance of auxiliary aid personnel, such as note takers, readers, writers, interpreters, science laboratory assistance, Assistive technology, etc., please notify the office as soon as possible. If you are sponsored by the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired or ACCES-VR, talk to your counselor about payment.

### Planning Ahead Academic Accessibility

It is often necessary to plan far in advance if you require academic accommodations due to your disability. For instance, if you are a student with a visual impairment and you have questions about participating in a science laboratory course, you must begin discussing the situation with the Director or the Assistant Director of OSSD and/or the Chairperson of the department almost a full semester before you plan to register for the

course. You must also plan ahead if you have a learning disability or hearing impairment and are concerned about the foreign language requirement.

There are many other times when it is important for students with disabilities to plan ahead in reference to their courses if they are going to have full access to their academic program. It is your responsibility to have the initiative to plan ahead. However, this is not always an easy task. If you require assistance in identifying potential problem areas, in working out accessibility in classes, or if you have trouble planning ahead, please schedule an appointment with the Director or Assistant Director.

## Priority Registration

Priority registration is not an entitlement which allows you to get the “perfect schedule”. It also does not exempt you from meeting general registration or other Baruch requirements (e.g. Zicklin Course Permission, prerequisites, academic holds, etc.) Nevertheless, there may be situations where the nature of the disability trumps the rule. In these instances you will need to discuss the situation with the Director or Assistant Director. Each request will be handled on an individual basis.

## Substitutions

Students who consider that they have a documented disability which precludes learning a subject should contact OSSD. The Director or Assistant Director will explain the procedure to attain a substitution. Please note that any substitution you receive may affect your ability to enter into certain Graduate Programs or qualify for Licensing Exams.

## ADA Part- time TAP

The ADA TAP accommodation allows students who are unable to take a full time course load because of their disability to take at least three semester hours of credit-bearing work. It is necessary to request participation in this program **each semester**. If you believe that you qualify for this accommodation, please schedule an appointment with the Director or the Assistant Director.

## Elevator Information

In an effort to ease the difficulty you may likely experience trying to get into elevators in the Vertical Building and 17 Lexington Avenue during our busy times, we created a plan. The increased signage asking for courtesy on the part of the Baruch community did not have much impact. There is no way to demand consideration.

Our plan to provide assistance is as follows. If you are stuck on a floor, please call Security (646-312-4888) and tell them where you are. If someone from Security is not available, they will call OSSD for assistance. If someone is not free from our office, please contact The Office of the Dean of Students (646-312-4570). This is to ensure that someone can quickly meet you and make sure space is made for you to enter the elevator. Hopefully, a secondary gain will be the increase in awareness by the Baruch community concerning issues for students with mobility impairments.

## Security Emergency Evacuation Plan



You are encouraged to think about whether or not your safety would be jeopardized if you did not receive special assistance in a fire or other emergency due to your disability. If you have not already done so, please fill out the Emergency Evacuation Plan form in the reception area of OSSD. A staff member can assist you in completing the form, if needed.

# Assistive Technology Services

Consistent with Baruch College's mission of access and excellence in post-secondary education, the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD) strives to help students who rely on Assistive Technology achieve their educational, professional and personal goals.

## Objectives:

- Enhance compliance with the requirements of federal, state, and local laws and policies regarding the use of Assistive Technology to achieve equal access for students with disabilities
- Distribute resources and provide support for the delivery of consistent and efficient Assistive Technology throughout the Baruch community
- Assess students' Assistive Technology needs
- Train students with disabilities in the use of Assistive Technology and Digital Devices

## What is Assistive Technology?



Assistive Technology is a device or software specifically designed for individuals with disabilities to access electronic and information technology independently.

Blind individuals often use screen reading software to access the computer using a variety of keyboard commands, while screen enlargement software can magnify the computer screen for individuals that are visually impaired. A Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) also allows visually impaired users the ability to enlarge hard copy materials.

There is also software to support and improve reading comprehension, memory retention and study skills for individuals with learning disabilities. A variety of recorders and a smart pen can assist students with note taking and organization. Those who have difficulty using a traditional keyboard and

mouse may use alternate keyboards and mice, in addition to speech recognition software to input information on a computer. Assistive listening devices amplify the sound of the speaker during lectures for those who are hard of hearing.

In order to be accommodated with any Assistive Technology, students must schedule an intake with the Director or Assistant Director in the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities and provide the appropriate documentation of their disability.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

### **Students with disabilities have the right to:**

- Full and equal participation in all services and activities of the college
- Reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services
- Privacy and to not have confidential information freely disseminated throughout campus
- Limit access to confidential records. In doing so, however, students recognize that implementing accommodations may become more difficult
- Information readily available in accessible formats

### **Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:**

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, and activities
- Identify as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel and assistance as necessary
- Demonstrate and/or document (from an appropriate professional) how the disability limits their participation in courses, programs, services, and activities
- Follow published procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services, or requesting barrier removal

## **The college, through faculty and staff, has the right to:**

- Establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge and standards for courses, programs, services, jobs and activities or facilities and to evaluate students on this basis
- Confirm disability status and request and receive current, relevant documentation that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services
- Have appropriate staff discuss students and their disabilities in order to implement requested accommodations (particularly instructional accommodations)
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments or auxiliary aids and services, and/or barrier removal in facilities if the documentation does not demonstrate that the request is warranted, or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentations
- Select among equally effective accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services
- Refuse unreasonable accommodations, academic adjustments or auxiliary aids and services, and/or facility-relation barrier removal request that impose a fundamental alteration on a program or activity of the college

## **The college has the responsibility to:**

- Provide information to faculty, staff, students and guests with disabilities in accessible formats upon request
- Ensure that courses, programs, services, activities and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are available and usable in the most integrated and appropriate settings
- Evaluate students on the basis of their abilities and not their disabilities
- Respond to requests on a timely basis
- Provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities in courses, programs, services, jobs, activities and facilities
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication except where permitted or required by law

# How to Best Notify your Professors Concerning your Disability



Talking to professors about disability and individual needs can be difficult, both emotionally and practically. However, it is in your best interest if you have a discussion with your professor(s). Here are some tips regarding how to proceed:

- It is always necessary to provide your professor with official verification of your disability as well as an official request of reasonable accommodations. This is accomplished through the use of the memos, letters and forms provided by the staff of OSSD.
- Remember to read these memos as it is absolutely essential that you understand what these memos say to your professor. Also, be sure that you never give out blank memos.
- Next, you must make sure that you find a time to talk with your professor. You will note that the memo you give to your professor doesn't state what your disability is. This information is confidential; therefore you may wish to access your right to accommodation while minimizing the risk of stigma sometimes associated with disabilities. On the other hand, we know that it is often helpful to disclose your disability to your professor and explain how the accommodation(s) listed on the "Accommodation Request Form" compensates for your deficit area(s).
- Remember, the better your professors know you and the more they understand the reason for your needs, the more likely you will be to get their full cooperation. In other words, the more accessible you are to your professors the more accessible they may be to you.

- During this initial discussion it is also necessary to carefully discuss how you will arrange for individual testing, if you require it. Please make sure that your professors understand how to work with you and OSSD to provide you with reasonable test accommodations.
- When you distribute your OSSD accommodation letters to your professors, remember to also have a discussion with them so that they can have a better understanding of what this document represents.

If you need any further assistance with this process, please schedule an appointment with the Director or the Assistant Director of OSSD.

## Alternative Testing

The purpose of alternative testing is to permit students to be evaluated on the basis of their knowledge of course content without undue interference from their disability. Examples of more common test accommodations include extended time, a semi-private room, and a taped or brailled exam, use of Assistive equipment such as a computer or text enlarger, or an alternative test date. Below you will find an explanation of the accommodations:

- **Extended time** is recommended for a student whose performance is compromised by a physical or cognitive impairment that causes significantly slower reading, writing, recalling or organization of information.
- A **distraction-free room** is recommended for students who have significant difficulty with concentration, or are highly distractible, or employ strategies that might be distracting to those around them (e.g., read questions aloud). Some students



with physical disabilities may need a separate room in order to lie down or stand up as a way to manage pain or muscular conditions.

- **Assistive equipment** permits a student to read and/or respond to a standard test.
- Tests may be provided in **alternative formats** (e.g., tape recorded, brailled or large print) for students with print impairments. This may include students with reading or visual disabilities.
- Students whose disabilities fluctuate (e.g., depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, diabetes, etc.) may request a **test date change** so that they are able to take the exam when interference from their conditions are minimal. Students are expected to take exams within a reasonable amount of time from the original test date and to notify the instructor of this request in a timely manner.
- Some students request an **alternative test format**, for example, an essay exam is substituted for a multiple-choice exam. In this situation, the intent of the test format will be discussed to determine whether or not a different format can accurately show what the student has learned. In some cases, altering the test format fundamentally changes the nature of the course thus, altering the test format is not appropriate.

The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities provides recommendations regarding test accommodations; faculty may review the recommendations and offer alternatives. A faculty member may choose to offer more or different accommodations than those recommended by OSSD.

## Securing Audio and Electronic Textbooks



With the passage of Chapter 219 of the ADA Law, students who have been determined to receive audio and electronic textbooks by the Director or Assistant Director, can secure textbooks in alternative formats. This law requires publishers to provide students in higher education with textbooks in alternative formats. However, you first have to get approval from the OSSD. Jennifer Sayers of the Barnes & Noble

Bookstore at Baruch College and the OSSD will assist you to make sure that you receive your audio and eBooks in a timely manner. In order to reach this goal, we count on you to do the following:

- If you are not sure what textbooks you need for your classes, go to [baruch.bncollege.com](http://baruch.bncollege.com) and look up textbooks. There, you will find the titles and editions of the books needed for each of your classes. Should you require further assistance, please contact Jennifer Sayers at (Tel: 646-312-4854/ Fax: 646-312- 4858) or email [tm8065@bncollege.com](mailto:tm8065@bncollege.com).
- If you have a subscription with Learning Ally, you can log onto [www.learningally.org](http://www.learningally.org) to sign in. If Learning Ally cannot provide you with your books in alternate format, please contact Harriet Baer at 646-312-4590 who will order them from the publishers. Note: You are required by law to purchase the print textbook of any electronic copy you receive from a publisher. In fact, we cannot give you the electronic copy of any book until you bring us a receipt for that particular book.
- Finally, if the books are not available from Learning Ally or the publishers, inform Harriet Baer or Ron Bissessar about this so OSSD can discuss alternate methods such as scanning to provide you with audio/ electronic copies of your textbooks. As always, discuss all other accommodations you may require with OSSD.
- Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns with this process.

# Testing Accommodations Guidelines/Contract

Students receiving alternative testing arrangements from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities are required to follow our procedures:

1. In the beginning of each semester, discuss with your professors your testing accommodations. This is done by introducing yourself and handing your professor a memo from our office.
2. Remember it is best if your professor can administer the exam with the appropriate testing accommodations. This way, problems such as exam security and misplaced tests can be avoided. However, if it is possible for your professor to handle this non-standard test administration, our office will do its best to administer the exam. Your professor must allow your accommodations.
3. Schedule your exam with us at least one week in advance by providing us with the following information:
  - a. Enter exam information into the exam book (i.e., date, subject, professor's name). If you cannot come to the office to schedule your exam, please email your information to [evelyn.morales@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:evelyn.morales@baruch.cuny.edu) and cc: [harriet.baer@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:harriet.baer@baruch.cuny.edu)
  - b. The time you will be arriving for your exam and the time you expect to finish.
  - c. Your accommodations (i.e., PC, large print, etc.)
  - d. If you are taking your exam at a different time from your class, we must have written permission or a telephone call from your professor
  - e. Your professor should (email, fax, or hand deliver) the exam to our office.

If for any reason you are not getting the accommodations you need, please inform the Director of OSSD. Also, if you believe you need a new accommodation you must discuss this with the Director.

If is essential for you to realize that taking your exam in our office is the equivalent of taking it with your professor, and we are responsible for the integrity of the exam. **We expect you to be punctual and behave as if you were taking the exam in class.** If you are late, the extra allotted time will be deducted from the time you are given. Otherwise, you may talk to your professor about rescheduling the exam. You should know that our testing rooms are monitored by security cameras.

I have read the instructions above, and fully understand my obligation toward receiving accommodations for my exams. My signature also indicates that I understand and accept the consequences of my actions with respect to academic dishonesty, and I hereby state that I will not give assistance to anyone, receive assistance from anyone, nor will I use any unauthorized notes during any exam. In addition, I am on my honor to neither provide nor reveal information from or to my peers if I take my exam on an alternate date from the class.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **What is CUNY LEADS?**

### **CUNY LEADS Mission:**

CUNY LEADS is a unique program of the City University of New York created to provide students with disabilities the skills to make realistic academic and career choices that will result in successful career outcomes. Each campus has a LEADS advisor who provides academic/career counseling and a variety of career related services to each LEADS student.

### **Services for LEADS students may include:**

- Academic advisement
- Career counseling
- Resume preparation assistance
- Interview preparation assistance
- Internship assistance
- Job seeking assistance
- Referral assistance with ACCES/VR

### **Who may be eligible for CUNY LEADS?**

- CUNY students with disabilities who are currently registered in Degree or Non-degree programs, Adult Continuing Education or Allied programs.
- Any CUNY student who is sponsored by ACCES/VR.
- Students do not have to be registered with the campus disabilities office to qualify for LEADS.
- If you are a CUNY student with a disability, see the LEADS advisor on your campus to determine if you are eligible.

### **CUNY LEADS Questions to consider:**

- Do you already have a specific career goal in mind?
- Are you unsure of what you would like to do, but would be interested in discussing career possibilities with an advisor?
- Are you currently employed, but not in a position along your career track, and would be interested in working on job seeking skills such as resume writing and interview skills?

***This exciting program is free for all eligible students!***

**For additional information, contact:**

**Sydacia Bunbury**

CUNY LEADS Advisor

Office of Services for Students with Disabilities

Sydacia.Bunbury@baruch.cuny.edu/(646) 312-4590

## Staff Contact Information

TBA, **Director**

**Email:**

Lillian Shmulevich, **Assistant Director**

**Email:** [Lillian.Shmulevich@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Lillian.Shmulevich@baruch.cuny.edu)

Ronald Bissessar, **Student Disability Services Manager**

**Email:** [Ronald.Bissessar@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Ronald.Bissessar@baruch.cuny.edu)

Reginald Coupet, **Student Accessibility Assistant**

**Email:** [Reginald.Coupet@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Reginald.Coupet@baruch.cuny.edu)

Sydacia Bunbury, **LEADS Counselor**

**Email:** [Sydacia.Bunbury@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Sydacia.Bunbury@baruch.cuny.edu)

Evelyn Morales, **Office Assistant**

**Email:** [Evelyn.Morales@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Evelyn.Morales@baruch.cuny.edu)

Harriet Baer, **Disability Accommodations Specialist**

**Email:** [Harriet.Baer@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Harriet.Baer@baruch.cuny.edu)

