



Office of Accessibility Services

Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty

What is the Office of Accessibility Services?

We exist because the law dictates that public and private colleges and universities must provide equal access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. All public or private schools that receive federal funding (e.g. students who receive federal financial aid) are required under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to make their program benefits and services accessible to students with disabilities.

If University facilities, academic policies, or curricula do not enable a student with a disability to live and learn on campus, the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) is required to provide accommodations that eliminate barriers to their participation. In high school administrators must identify and accommodate students with disabilities, and often create an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan. A university-level student must initiate contact with OAS, disclose their disability, and request accommodations.

Statistics indicate that only one third of students who had disability-related accommodations in high school will disclose when they go to college. Therefore, most of the students who have a disability may be enrolled (rewrite)

The OAS staff is required to assess the reasonableness of each accommodation request. Modifications of policies and practices are not required when it would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity. Our OAS staff will engage in discussions with faculty if we or you believe the requested accommodation may impact your curriculum or course delivery.

The [Office of Accessibility Services](#) is responsible for reviewing accommodations requests from students with disabilities. Students may request accommodations at any time, but most students will begin the process during the Spring and Summer months in preparation for the Fall semester. Many first-year students have had individualized plans (IEPs or 504s) that helped them to be successful in high school and some elements of those plans might be approved as accommodations at the university level. OAS



Bryant University

staff will review documentation from a medical provider and facilitate an intake appointment with the student to learn more about their previous experiences and determine reasonable accommodations.

The Office of Accessibility Services is located on the ground floor of the Unistructure, across from the Admissions Atrium. OAS also operates the [Academic Testing Center \(ATC\)](#). The Center, located in M34 of the Unistructure, has a large, distraction-reduced room with privacy carrels, individual testing space, lockers for secure storage of personal items, a waiting area, and an accessible bathroom.

What are accommodations?

Accommodations provide equal access to all programs, services, and spaces to students with disabilities. They “level the playing field” so they have the chance to live and learn in the way that their peers do. Accommodations DO NOT guarantee success. They do not require instructors to lower expectations or assign less work. They require that instructors implement OAS-approved accommodations in their classrooms, which may require instructors to adapt existing assignment rubrics, recruit note takers for the student, or work with the Academic Testing Center if the student requires extended time on testing or an alternate test-taking space. These are just several examples of what may be asked of instructors.

There are two main types of accommodations that faculty will interact with are Classroom and Testing. Classroom accommodations ensure access to class materials, access to the physical classroom, assistive technology, and access challenges posed by chronic or severe health issues. Testing accommodations enable students to demonstrate their knowledge under conditions that take into account their disability related access challenges. Examples include extra time on exams, alternate testing location, distraction reduced testing area, use of a reader or a scribe, among others.

Why are students approved for accommodations?

The OAS exists because the law requires all colleges and universities who receive federal funding to uphold Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

“The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.”



<https://adata.org/learn-about-ada>

Therefore, all private institutions of higher education who receive federal financial aid funds on behalf of qualified students must abide by these laws. Providing and implementing accommodations is essential for student access, student retention and to maintain the reputational and financial health of the University. The ramifications of not doing so can be far-reaching.

What are my responsibilities as a faculty member?

As stated above, instructors will implement approved accommodations. OAS will ask instructors to confirm receipt of the Letter of Accommodation (LOA) for each student with accommodations. OAS will be available to support the student and instructor as they discuss how they are implemented in their course for the individual student. Completing this confirmation process ensures compliance, and it cannot be done properly without the involvement of the professor.

How can I communicate with my students about OAS and accommodations?

One way to do this is using a syllabus statement. Professors may use this statement to alert students to OAS services.

Sample Syllabus Statement: Professors at Bryant University will provide equal access to the classroom and all course material as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Accommodations will be implemented as approved by the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). I invite you to see me during office hours to discuss previously approved accommodations and needs that are specific to this course. Students who plan to request accommodations, or simply want to explore OAS services, including the Testing Center, may use this link to learn more.

A second way instructors can notify students about OAS is by requesting that students speak with them about the implementation of approved accommodations. OAS is available to help facilitate these conversations.



What if I think the student's accommodations are fundamentally changing my course goals?

OAS will never ask you to lower your expectations for a student with a disability. We will carefully evaluate the needs of the student and how they will be applied in your course. If the accommodations seem to fundamentally alter the primary learning goals of the course or academic program, our staff will consult with you, and possibly your department chair or Dean to discuss it.

How do I discuss the student's disability or accommodations with them?

It is vital to maintain student confidentiality regarding their status as a person with a disability. Faculty play an important role in achieving this. Please refrain from discussing a student's disability status and accommodations within hearing range of fellow students, faculty, staff or others who do not have an educational need to know. At no time should the class be informed that a student has a disability or receives accommodations. Should a student approach you to discuss their disability or accommodations, feel free to engage them in a private setting. OAS is here to help facilitate these discussions as needed.

How do I contact OAS?

AccessibilitySvcs@bryant.edu 401-232-6880 Ground floor of Unistructure, across from Admissions Atrium

AcademicTestignctr@bryant.edu 401-232-6830 M34 - Unistructure

Marie Saddlemire – Director, Office of Accessibility Services, 401-232-6532, msaddlemire@bryant.edu
Ground floor of the Unistructure, across from the Admissions Atrium

Deb Arenberg – Program Administrator, Academic Testing Center, 401-232-6851,
darenberg@bryant.edu M34 - Unistructure

Jay Caliri – Student Accessibility Specialist, Academic Testing Center. 401-232-6853, jcaliri@bryant.edu
Ground floor of the Unistructure, across from the Admissions Atrium

What do I do if I suspect a student has a disability?

If you suspect a student may have a disability it is best not to communicate your suspicions to the student. This is an opportunity to speak to the student about their performance and your observations in your class. If they disclose to you, they have been previously diagnosed with a disability, please refer



them to the Office of Accessibility Services. If not, you can then refer them to Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and the Writing Center. Here, they can meet with a learning specialist to discuss learning challenges and develop strategies for academic success. If the learning specialist suspects the student has a disability, the student may be referred to the Office of Accessibility Services. OAS may then make a referral for testing or support services.

If a student discloses that they had accommodations during high school or at another university, feel free to refer them to our office. Please refrain from granting accommodations without OAS involvement, no matter how small or insignificant you believe the changes to be. OAS staff are trained to look at the larger profile of the student and may find that the student needs more or different accommodations to ensure access.

What is ClockWork and who do I contact if I need technical assistance?

ClockWork is the data management system for the Office of Accessibility Services, including the Academic Testing Center. ClockWork can be accessed through the My Bryant portal or the [Instructor Login](#) page. If you would like support using ClockWork, please contact Jay Caliri in the Office of Accessibility Services. He can be reached at jcaliri@bryant.edu or 401-232-6853.

What type of assistive technology can I expect to see in my classroom?

Assistive technology allows students to maintain independence in the classroom and provides organization and clarity of the course material. The Office of Accessibility Services takes the issue of confidentiality and privacy very seriously. All students must sign a confidentiality agreement, prohibiting the posting and sharing of classroom recordings to other students, the internet, and other platforms.

Glean – [Glean Video](#) – Glean is a speech-to-text software designed to help students capture and organize information from lectures and study materials more effectively. The software allows students to import slides, PDFs, and graphs to their notes. Glean records the lecture and provides both audio and text transcripts. Students are able to insert pictures, definitions, and create assignments within a note taking event. Lightning mode allows for students to make quick highlights of important pieces of information and assignments, set reminders to go back and update their notes, and review important sections later. Students can also create collections for each class, semester, and professor. Glean can be used both off and online and has a mobile app available as well.



Bryant University

Speechify - [Speechify Videos](#) – Speechify is a text to speech software that allows students to listen to all formats of reading materials. Speechify allows students to scan papers and physical texts, import PDFs, cloud or computer files, and has a chrome extension that allows students to listen to any webpage. A mobile application is also available.

Other assistive technology you may see in your classroom are screen readers, smart pens, reader pens, FM systems, use of laptop for in class notes, writing assignments and tests, as well as alternate format of textbooks.

How can I learn more about supporting my students with disabilities?

State of RI Governor's Commission on Disabilities: <https://gcd.ri.gov/>

Children of Deaf Adults - <https://www.coda-international.org/>

State of RI Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: <http://www.cdhh.ri.gov/information-referral/ri-resource-directory.php>

Disability Resources in RI (Office of Library and Information Services): <https://olis.ri.gov/talking-books/resources/disability-resources-rhode-island#content>

New England ADA Center: <https://www.newenglandada.org/>

Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind: <https://ors.ri.gov/programs/services-blind-and-visually-impaired/governors-advisory-council-blind>

National Alliance on Mental Illness: <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions>

ADDitude - <https://www.additudemag.com/>

Learning Disabilities Association of America <https://ldaamerica.org>