



Grace Bible College Graduate Studies Policy Guidelines: Accommodations and Accessibility to Distance Learners

Grace Bible College is committed to providing a rich and comprehensive learning experience for all distance-learning students taking online courses. The core of our policies for ensuring equal access is shared expectations between distance learners and faculty teaching online about how course material will be presented in a manner that is consistent and accessible to all of Grace Bible College's students.

1. Expectations

Faculty and students share expectations about the accessibility of online course material that facilitate a successful educational experience between student and faculty. These are the foundational expectations:

- Reasonable Prerequisites: The faculty can reasonably expect that a distance learner, about to take a course online, will have his/her own computer and internet connection, basic computer literacy, and essential assistive technology that already allows the student to use accessibly designed web sites.
- Students: The student can reasonably expect that an online course will be prepared and delivered in such a way that it meets a standard and consistent level of accessibility, known to the student before the course begins.
- Faculty: Faculty teaching an online course can reasonably expect that a student will be able to access and complete a course prepared and delivered in accord with the accessibility requirements.

2. Accommodations for Distance Learners

Grace Bible College strives to implement accommodations for distance learners that are consistent with those for resident students as possible.

- Disclosing Disabilities: Request for accommodation from distance learners requires the same level of disclosure as for resident students: the same disclosure forms be submitted and approved, following the same procedures, as for resident students.
- Intangible Accommodations: Non-material accommodations, such as extra time to complete quizzes and exams can be made available to distance learners in substantially the same way that it can be offered to resident students.



- eBooks, Braille texts, and Large Print books: Every effort will be made to make sure that required textbooks will be available in a variety of formats.
- Digital readings, such as web-articles and .pdfs may be scaled to larger size. Professors will be asked to make use of this kind of resource whenever needed.
- Hardware and other Tangible Accommodations: Grace Bible College cannot reasonably provide assistive hardware in the same way that it can to resident students. It is the student's responsibility to acquire any needed hardware.
- Human Assistants: Accommodations such as assistance from sign interpreters and note takers can be provided to resident students thanks to help from other resident students, but such accommodations are generally not available to distance learners.

3. Tips for Students

Is Distance Learning Right for You?

Many students with disabilities feel that studying online will be the solution to their accommodation needs. You may be considering online study for the same reasons. What you need to be aware of is that studying online solves some problems but may create new ones, which may need different accommodations. You should enroll in an online course only after you have taken the time to consider carefully the requirements of the course, along with your strengths and weaknesses.

Online study creates the need for accommodations that are different from those for traditional, in-class study, which makes determining which accommodations you wish to request a unique process. Your request should be based on a review of the functional limitations of your disability.

Disability affects each student differently, depending largely on your ability to compensate for its effects.

Areas of difficulty may be:

- comprehending written instructions
- participating in online discussions
- viewing online video postings
- managing your time to complete assignments
- others unique to your situation

All accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis with the information you provide to Grace Bible College and the accommodations you have requested.



To help you decide whether online study and distance learning is right for you, ask these questions and participate in one or both of these online surveys:

<https://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html>

<http://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/>

- How well do I manage my time?
- Does my disability affect my ability to process and comprehend written information?
For individuals with certain disabilities, managing the content, directions and discussion in an online course can be difficult. Information in an online course is frequently delivered via written material through a website. The instructor will not be immediately available to provide clarification for any misunderstood concepts or assignments.
- How comfortable am I with computers and technology?
It is important to be aware of your current comfort level with technology and computers. Accessing all course information and instruction in an online format may be more intimidating and stressful than engaging in guided independent study. Knowing your comfort level with computers and technology will allow you to determine whether or not online study is for you.
- What do I expect of the online study?
It's important to be aware of your expectations of the online study. What kind of interaction are you expecting from the instructor? Are you expecting a lot of personal interaction or a little? Do you think that you will have a lot of writing to do or not as much? What information are you basing your expectations on? You should find out as much as possible about the format of the online study, the expectations the instructors have of you and what you need to do to successfully complete the course. The more information you learn about the study prior to enrolling and beginning it, the better you can determine if online study is for you.

4. Requesting Accommodations:

- Fill out and submit the Accommodations Form
- Submit any IEP, 1040 or professional diagnosis documentation
- Your request will be presented to the Academic Dean for approval
- You will be notified of all approved accommodations



5. Accessibility and the Law

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states, "that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Compliance with this law required that college and universities "make such modification to [their] academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating," against a qualified disabled applicant or student. "Modifications may include changes in the length of time permitted for completion of degree requirements and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted." [34 CFR Section 104.44]

A recent settlement agreement between the Department of Justice and Louisiana Tech University (2013) mandates that, in post-secondary education:

...all technology, including websites, instructional materials and online courses, and other electronic and information technology for use by students or prospective students, is accessible.

Further, the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education clarified in an earlier agreement (2013) with the South Carolina Technical College System:

"Accessible' means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally and independently as a person without a disability. Although this might not result in identical ease of use compared to that of persons without disabilities, it still must ensure equal opportunity to the educational benefits and opportunities afforded by the technology and equal treatment in the use of such technology."



6. Sources

Settlement Agreement between the United States and America, Louisiana Tech University, and the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System under the Americans with Disabilities Act, US Department of Justice document number 204-33-116, 23 July 2013; <http://www.ada.gov/louisiana-tech.htm>.

Resolution Agreement: South Carolina Technical College System OCR [Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights] compliance Review No. 11-11-6002, US Department of Education, 28 February 2013; <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/11116002-b.pdf>.

"Accommodations for Online Courses", 2013 Empire State College; <http://www.esc.edu/disability-services/studenthandbook/accommodations-overview/online-courses/>



REQUEST FOR ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

_____ is hereby requesting the following accommodations:

Printed Student's Name

- Extended Time for Tests and Exams** - A student may be granted extended time for testing. This time will be limited to 150% of the normal time allotted.
- eBooks, Braille texts, and Large Print books:** Every effort will be made to make sure that required textbooks will be available in a variety of formats.
- Hardware and other Tangible Accommodations:** Grace Bible College cannot reasonably provide assistive hardware in the same way that it can to resident students. In some cases, however, assistive hardware may be available through an Assistive Hardware Lending Library. It is the student's responsibility to acquire any needed hardware.

I have reviewed the above information and testify that the above information is accurate on date of signature.

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

Vice President for Academics

Please complete this form and return with required documentation to Rebecca Zuber, the Graduate Studies Specialist.