

Chapter 5

Mobility Impairments

A. Overview

Many professors tend to think of mobility impairment as a more general college accessibility issue and not so much a classroom concern. But that's not true. There is a wide range of mobility impairments — arthritis, multiple sclerosis, amputation, repetitive stress injuries, etc. — that require varying degrees of classroom accommodation.

While campus accessibility is not your responsibility, you need to be aware of the barriers that students with mobility impairments may face getting to your classroom. If you find that a classroom is not accessible, let your disability services office know. And be sensitive to the needs of those using wheelchairs, walkers and crutches.

Possible student characteristics

- Trouble getting to class on time.
- Difficulty handling/moving objects, such as pencils, book pages, etc.
- Difficulty walking for long periods of time.
- Use of wheelchair, walker or crutches.
- Low stamina.
- Tendency to have more incidences of respiratory illnesses.
- Use of service animals.
- Use of personal caretakers.

Possible accommodations

The accommodations needed by students with mobility impairments vary greatly. As always, decisions as to appropriate accommodations should be made on a case-by-case basis. No particular accommodations are appropriate for all students, but below are some common ones offered students with mobility impairments. Some types of classrooms, such as labs, will require very specific accommodations.

- Note-takers.
- Tape recorders.
- Extended time on exams.
- Alternate location for exams.
- Moving classroom to an accessible building.
- Extended time for assignments.
- Distraction-reduced testing environment.
- Advance notice of field trips and classroom changes.
- Classrooms with clear, wide aisles.
- Seating near exits.
- Scribes.
- Additional space for service animals.
- Accessible transportation for field trips and off-campus assignments.
- Special accommodations for any overseas courses.
- Modification of classrooms.

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