

C. Frequently Asked Questions

Question: If a publisher has not provided accessible files or permission to create files for a blind student, and it's two weeks into the term, what do I do?

Answer: Letting bureaucratic conditions impede a student's education is just not OK. Go ahead and create alt text for the student. In fact, if the student put in the request in a timely manner, you should not have waited until the second week of the term to respond.

Question: Am I responsible for selecting a textbook that is available in Braille?

Answer: Probably not. Work with your Disability Services Office to make sure you know your college's procedures for providing materials in an alternative format.

Question: When you say "alternative format," you mean Braille, right?

Answer: No. A book or test in an alternative format also could be one on cassette or an electronic file.

Question: Can I provide classroom materials via e-mail? Would that be an "electronic file?"

Answer: Absolutely. You also could provide the materials on a computer disk.

Question: What if I'm giving a test, but didn't prepare it in an alternative format?

Answer: You need to work with your DS Office to ensure that the student with visual impairments receives materials in the appropriate format to participate in the class. But another accommodation besides Braille, books on tape, or electronic files is scribes or readers who can read the test questions to the student. The student then voices her answer and the scribe writes it down and reads the answer back to the student to ensure that it's correct.

Question: Won't this take more time?

Answer: Yes, that's why students who are blind or have low vision often require double the amount of time to complete an exam. And that goes for those who use Braille. Even individuals highly skilled at Braille require much more time to read through materials in that format. Also, you'll want to consider moving the test to another room.

Question: What if a student's guide dog gets out of control in class. What can I do?

Answer: The owner of a service animal is required to keep it under control in classrooms and laboratories. You can ask a student to remove a service animal if it poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, but you can't ask for its removal because of breed or size.