Office of Educational Accessibility

access@uarts.edu | 215-717-6616 | Kelly Deasy, Director

We continue to offer appointments virtually through Zoom and Google Meet. Staff will be available in-person from 9 am -5 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the fall semester located in Gershman 204.

About OEA:

The Office of Educational Accessibility is committed to providing equal access to individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The ADA of 1990 and the ADAAA of 2008. UArts will make reasonable accommodations unless doing so will fundamentally alter the nature of the service or program or pose an undue administrative or financial burden. The Office of Educational Accessibility provides services that promote independence and inclusion in all areas of university life.

Eligibility of Support and Accommodations:

- Comprehensive process of determination
- Documentation from qualifying professional must include: 1. Diagnosis 2. Functional Limitations 3. Recommendations for support
- A Course Access Memo is provided to each instructor that includes accommodations, not nature of disability

Confidentiality:

The college cannot provide information about a student's academic record unless the student signs a release of information. Student information obtained by UArts shall only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Students may choose to discuss their situation with faculty; faculty should not ask specific questions about the nature of their disability

Accommodations, not limited to:

- Extended time on tests and exams
- Reduced distraction test environment
- Flexibility in attendance and deadlines
- Textbooks in alternative format
- Note-taking or audio recording device
- Use of a calculator
- Use of a computer for tests and exams
- Housing accommodations

Note: Accommodations do not compromise the essential elements of a course or curriculum. Accommodations provide an alternative way to accomplish the course requirements by reducing disability-related barriers. The purpose of accommodations is to provide a level playing field.

Course Access Memos:

Course Access Memos are distributed to faculty from access@uarts.edu once a student requests that they be sent out each semester. The Memo lists the student's accommodations; students are responsible for initiating contact with instructors and discussing the implementation of accommodations, reasonableness of accommodations according to course design, and other factors.

Maintaining Essential Accommodations During Remote Learning

When classes are taught in an online format, the goal of disability accommodations remains the same: providing equitable access -- what has changed, and possibly changed significantly, is how best to implement a particular accommodation.

With a mind toward flexibility and finding creative solutions, the instructor's primary resource in implementing an accommodation is talking to the student who has the accommodation, discussing the goal of the accommodation and how it can best be implemented given the learning outcomes of your remote course. Faculty may find that some classroom accommodations are not even necessary in the remote setting, whereas others may call on additional creativity and flexibility to implement. Please note:

Test accommodations: Test accommodations should be adapted in the remote setting in order to allow each student an equitable opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the course material being tested, without penalizing the student, or putting them at a disadvantage because of their disability.

About absences:

In determining reasonableness of attendance, questions to consider:

- What is the course attendance policy? What do the course description and syllabus say?
- What method is used to calculate the final grade? (attendance, assignments, exams, etc.) and how much of student participation is calculated in the grade?
- Does the design of the course rely on student participation as a significant method for learning?
- How and when your student should inform you he/she will miss class
- How your student will make up missed assignments and/or exams
- The number of absences (beyond what any student is allowed) that would be reasonable
- Whether a drop, withdraw or incomplete may be appropriate based on your students' situation

Additional time on assignments:

Extra time on assignments does not mean open ended deadlines or permission to submit assignments at the student's convenience. Consideration of a deadline extension must be reasonable, and the amount of time granted for each extension will take into consideration the stated expectations of the assignments and the course. This accommodation must be negotiated between the student and the instructor for each assignment.

Statement on syllabus and announcement:

UArts values diverse types of learners and is committed to ensuring that each student is afforded an educational opportunity to participate in all learning experiences. If you have or think you may have a disability—including mental health, medical, physical, or learning-based—that would impact your educational

experience in this class, please contact the OEA at 215-717-6616 or access@uarts.edu to register for appropriate accommodations. Faculty can only provide course accommodations after receipt of an approved Course Access Memo from OEA.

Key considerations for OEA students in an online/remote learning environment:

1. **Universal Design**

   Adopt a universal design approach recording Zoom sessions which will provide transcriptions and make these available to all students with slides and teaching materials. This will assist students with executive functioning challenges, students with sensory impairments, and students whose home and learning circumstances are challenging as a result of the remote learning environment.

2. **For Office Hours consider Google Meet**

   Captions are available in this platform for hard-of-hearing students can be helpful for many other students. Google Meet is helpful for one-on-one meetings.

3. **Accessibility of Documents**

   a. Instructors may be tempted to increase the amount of readings required to supplement direct class instruction and as the basis of online discussions and assignments; readings shared by an instructor should be in an accessible form, for example as a Word doc or accessible PDF. Image based PDFs are not accessible and will require conversion to an accessible form before sharing/posting. Check for select, copy and paste functionality in a pdf document; if you can do this then basic accessibility is present. If you cannot do this the document is not accessible and it should not be used.

4. **Videos – should have closed captions / subtitles**

   a. For instructional material from, for example, YouTube, TED Talks, or other website videos, check to ensure that captions are available and accurate. Open the video and look for the "cc" in the player. Contact OEA if you have questions or need support with captioning videos.

   b. Captioning/subtitling a video you have prepared to share online:

      i. Consider recording your presentation with narration and then upload to YouTube and use the automatic captioning feature to get most of the captioning done, then tidy up the subtitle file and upload - set your video to "private" and pass the URL to your students - see Captioning YouTube Videos which describes this process.

      ii. Professional captioning for hard of hearing students – contact OEA for further information.

   c. Captioning/subtitling in real-time:

      i. Captioning/subtitles in Zoom is available to faculty and needs to be enabled inn Zoom settings. Please contact access@uarts.edu for instructions.

   d. Instructors presenting course content remotely whether in real-time or using a recording and who are moving between different presentations/displays should take care to verbalize their content and actions and supplement visual material orally to support students using assistive technologies and those who have difficulty with engaging with visual material.

B. Remote testing with accommodations

- Instructors will need to be flexible in relation to testing to ensure that students with testing accommodations are not disadvantaged; this may necessitate the use of alternative assessment methods.

- Short pop quizzes are notoriously challenging to administer with accommodations when delivered in the context of a time-limited class meeting period; please consider the extent to which they contribute to the course grade if students' testing accommodations cannot be met.

- If you have students needing the physical assistance of an examination assistant or more complex accommodations beyond your scope in an online environment you are encouraged to reach out to OEA staff via access@uarts.edu to explore options.

Universal Design in Teaching Strategies

- Clear, explicit instructions and objectives
- Multiple modes of presenting information; verbal and written
- Multiple ways of assessing student learning
- Repetition and summarization
- Checks for understanding and larger projects broken down into smaller assignments
- Feedback often and early in the semester
- Provide preview information of the lecture topics and offer PPTs in advance and/or following

Other Key Points

- Students can register for Educational Accessibility accommodations at any time, but accommodations do not work retroactively
- Students are responsible for self-disclosing and advocating for their needs
- Students are to discuss their accommodations with instructors once the Course Access Memo is sent
- Faculty are not obligated to provide accommodations unless they receive a Course Access Memo
- Flexibility in attendance and deadlines is not a blanket reason to miss class or turn in work late
- Any accommodations or modifications should go through OEA to serve all students fairly
- Accommodations are not a one size fits all; individualized and modified at the discretion of faculty and in consultation with OEA
- The types of disabilities range from cognitive differences to chronic illnesses. OEA works closely with other offices to provide accommodations and support. Students are often on several medications and seeking medical assistance regularly as part of their treatment plans and goals. Accommodations and OEA are one piece of their support system.
- Lastly, please also note that not all students with disabilities and chronic medical conditions connect with OEA and so there may be some students' whose needs only become apparent in this new environment and as a result of the unique challenges it may pose for them. Please use the CARE system if you see particular concerns and file a report under "disability."

Go to "Faculty Resources" of the uarts.edu/accessibility website for more resources and information.