Accommodations for DVM Students With Learning Disabilities

Effective April 2000 (Modified September 2016)

Information on Disabilities and Procedures

Learning Disability

A Learning Disability is defined as a persistent condition of presumed neurological dysfunction which may exist with other disabbling conditions. To be categorized as learning disabled, a student must exhibit:

• Average to above-average intellectual ability;
• Severe processing deficit(s);
• Severe aptitude-achievement discrepancy(ies); and
• Measured achievement in an instructional or employment setting.

Among the kinds of documentation sought to establish a learning disability is evidence that a student’s level of intelligence and level of academic achievement are several standard deviations apart. This “discrepancy model” type of documentation demonstrates that the student’s ability to achieve the level of academic performance typically associated with his or her level of intelligence would be impaired if the applicant’s disability were not accommodated.

ADD/ADHD

ADD/ADHD is a disorder with symptoms including difficulty in staying focused and paying attention, difficulty in controlling behavior, and hyperactivity.

LD and ADD/ADHD Testing

Since there is no single test to determine whether someone has these disorders, there can be great variance in the diagnoses from one specialist to another.

Psychological Disorders

These are any of the psychological disorders listed in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) IV, diagnosed by a professional.

Test Anxiety

Test Anxiety is a form of debilitating anxiety around test/exam taking that significantly impacts exam performance.
Symptoms of Test Anxiety

- Perspiration
- Headache
- Upset stomach/nausea
- Rapid heart beat
- Difficulty reading/understanding questions on the test/exam
- Difficulty organizing thoughts
- Do poorly on tests/exams even though he/she knows the material
- Mental blocking – going blank on questions or remembering the correct answers as soon as the test/exam is over

Test anxiety is not considered a disability by itself (there is no diagnosis of test anxiety in the DSM IV).

Some people may have an anxiety disorder, with part of this disorder manifested as test anxiety.

Emotional Support Animals and Service Dogs

Students who require a service dog in the learning environment can only be asked the nature of the service that the dog provides, and will be asked to provide verifying documentation to the Colorado State University Office of Resources for Disabled Students (RDS). Emotional support animals (ESA) are NOT service animals; they are legal in residences only. They are not generally allowed in learning environments unless there are extenuating circumstances verified by a health care professional and RDS. The presence of a service dog or an ESA (in the case of extenuating circumstances) is an accommodation, managed in a manner similar to accommodations actualized for learning and other disabilities (please see procedures below). The service dog or ESA is required to wear a vest or otherwise clearly identify as such.

Procedures for Receiving Accommodations

Accommodations related to disabilities are distinct from those enacted for personal circumstances or illness. For information regarding the latter, please refer to absence and/or leave policies on the DVM Student Resources webpage.

Students must identify themselves as being in need of official accommodation by contacting the CSU RDS. In compliance with federal non-discrimination law, the CSU RDS staff is responsible for verifying the presence of a disability and for recommending accommodations to academic and other campus units. Students must contact the CSU RDS annually (before fall semester) and present documentation of (or receive testing and subsequent documentation of) the
disability. In turn, the RDS office will provide certification and recommendation(s) for accommodation(s) to the CVMBS Office.

All RDS-recommended accommodations are subject to review by the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs (AD), and any concerns may be conveyed to the director of RDS. Acceptable accommodations must be reasonable and must not substantially change the educational objectives of the DVM program.

At the beginning of each semester, the office of the AD will send an electronic notification on behalf of each student with a disability to all of his/her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) course coordinators. The notification provides the following information:

- Name of student with a documented disability.
- Confirmation that the college received an official recommendation for accommodation for the student.
- Accommodation memo provided to the college office by RDS.
- Statement indicating that the student should contact his/her course coordinators within the first two weeks of each semester to arrange for accommodations.

If a student requires accommodations for examinations/assessments that he/she wishes to take in a suitable room at the VTH or on main campus, this intent should be conveyed to the course coordinator during the initial meeting, and detailed at least seven (7) days in advance of each examination or assessment. If the needed accommodations exceed what can reasonably be managed in the VTH or main campus facilities, or if the course coordinator or student prefers that the student completes the examination at the RDS office for any reason, the student must schedule an exam time online at least seven (7) days before the test. Once assessments are completed by students, they are returned to instructors in sealed envelopes indicating the name of the instructor and department associated with the course. The assessment will be returned to the main departmental office, and a person there will be asked to sign a document verifying receipt. All exams/quizzes will be returned as soon as possible after completion by the student.

Assessments completed during the morning of a particular day will be returned no later than 4:30 p.m. of the same day. Assessments completed after noon of a particular day will be returned no later than 10 a.m. the following day.

Exceptions to this process include laboratory examinations which will take place in the same location as for the rest of the class and will not be proctored by RDS. On-campus Canvas exams requiring use of tools or adaptations located only in RDS must be scheduled through RDS as described above.

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Course Coordinators Responsibilities

- Maintain the confidentiality and privacy of a student with a disability at all times; all accommodations should be arranged privately in advance. **Public/class discourse regarding a student with a disability or required accommodations are prohibited.** Any activity that will unnecessarily draw attention to the identification of disabled students will be avoided.

- Meet with the student at the beginning of the semester to arrange ongoing and consistent accommodation per RDS recommendations. **The student must initiate this meeting.**

- Ensure that faculty/house staff/technicians providing instruction to the student that requires enactment of accommodations are aware of accommodations as pertinent.

- Consult with the AD and RDS should he/she believe that the RDS-recommended accommodations substantially alter the educational objectives of the DVM program, or that full enactment of accommodations will be limited by available college resources.

- If an assessment will be completed at the RDS office, please upload or deliver the materials at least 4 hours before the student is scheduled to begin. If the materials are uploaded, only one set per course/section is required. For more information on checking student schedules at the RDS office, setting up exam dates, and conveying your materials to RDS please go to www.rds.colostate.edu and click on the link for “Exam Scheduling”.

Student Responsibilities

- Contact RDS prior to or at the start of each school year to arrange services. If a student develops a disability during the academic year or transfers into the program in the spring, the student should initiate the contact with RDS as soon as possible to ensure timely establishment of an accommodations plan.

- Meet with RDS staff annually to confirm the nature of the disability and obtain or revise accommodation recommendations.

- Verify that recommendations are received by the AD.

- **The student is highly encouraged to meet with each course coordinator within the first two weeks of class each semester, even if he/she does not anticipate actualizing accommodations in a given class or during a given semester.** Not uncommonly, students choose to actualize accommodations mid semester when academic demands are great, or after he/she has been unsuccessful in optimally performing in the
absence of accommodations. A proactive discussion with course coordinators to discuss course assessments and a tentative plan is very helpful in assisting the coordinator to best respond to mid-semester requests to activate accommodations. If a student develops a disability during the semester, he/she should communicate with each course coordinator as soon as the accommodation memo is conveyed from the AD.

- **In order to actualize accommodations for a given examination or assessment, the student must make arrangements with the course coordinator at least seven (7) days in advance. Accommodations will not be extended to students who request them within seven (7) days of the examination or assessment start.**
- Make arrangements to take examinations in the RDS testing center, when appropriate, with the course coordinator and RDS (as outlined above). The exam must be scheduled at least seven (7) days in advance of the examination start date.
- Limit requested accommodations to those officially recommended by RDS.
- Arrange to meet with the AD should any concerns or questions arise.