

## **OSWD Rights and Responsibilities**

OSWD recognizes that deafness and hearing disability are classified as a disability under Section 504 of the ADA laws; however, certain views identify with deafness, not as a disability, but rather as a culture.

In most cases, accommodations and special services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing tend to be consistent and uniform. At the same time, accommodations and special services can vary from university to university, depending on the type of institution and constituents served.

What makes Gallaudet University unique is the fact that it is a renowned institution of higher education for deaf and hard of hearing students. In a hearing institution, the deaf or hard of hearing student may require accommodations such as interpreting services and note taking services. Because Gallaudet employs bilingualism, all facets of academic life are fully accessible to deaf and hard of hearing students. Therefore certain accommodations, such as interpreting services and note taking services, may not provide any significant benefits unless the deaf or hard of hearing students have a disability such as low vision, deaf-blind, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, chronic illness, or physical or psychological disabilities that require accommodation.

So, while OSWD recognizes that deafness or hearing impairment is considered a disability under the law, the principle activity of OSWD is to ensure equal access for deaf students with disabilities.

OSWD has the right to:

- Determine reasonable, appropriate, and effective accommodations on an individual basis
- Review disability documentation and assess student accommodation needs
- Modify accommodations based on a doctor's documentation in compliance with ADA and Section 504 laws

OSWD has the responsibility to:

- Inform students of office location and procedures for requesting accommodations
- Accept and evaluate disability documentation to determine eligibility for OSWD services
- Maintain medical, psychological, or psycho-educational documentation for each student
- Approve appropriate and reasonable accommodations
- Provide notification to faculty as directed by the student
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and information pertaining to a student's disability
- Protect student privacy and confidentiality
- Ensure equal access to programs and services to students with disabilities

## **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Students have the right to:

- Be certain that all disability-related information is treated confidentially
- Receive appropriate accommodations in a timely manner from faculty and OSWD

- Obtain full and equal participation in, and access to, academic courses, programs, services, and activities on campus
- Appeal decisions regarding accommodations and auxiliary aids

Students have the Responsibility to:

- Meet the essential qualifications and institutional standards of Gallaudet University
- Disclose their disability to OSWD in a timely manner
- Provide appropriate medical, psychological, or psycho-educational documentation so that eligibility for OSWD services can be determined
- Inform OSWD of accommodations needs
- Inform OSWD immediately of any barriers that arise with a course faculty in securing accommodations
- Meet with faculty to discuss accommodations listed on the Faculty Accommodations Letter as needed
- Attend all classes as required
- Meet all the course syllabus requirements

OSWD does not absolve the student of responsibilities during the time it takes to assess eligibility and arrange accommodations and special services. The student cannot use a disability as an excuse for not fulfilling the obligations and requirements of the course syllabus.

### **Faculty Rights and Responsibilities**

A faculty member who suspects that a student has a disability is encouraged to refer the student to OSWD for assistance.

Faculty members are encouraged to involve OSWD to mediate certain student disputes relevant to disability issues and accommodations. Often such meetings result in proactive solutions improving upon accommodations and accessibility.

Faculty members must refrain from personal judgments that affect the student's right to receive accommodations and special services. It is the student's right to receive identified accommodations for which the student has been qualified.

Faculty have the Right to:

- Deny a request for accommodations if the student has not been approved for such accommodations.
- Request verification of a student's eligibility for any requested accommodations. Such verification will be in the form of a letter written by OSWD delivered directly to the faculty member. OSWD is the only office on campus designated to review disability documentation and determine eligibility for appropriate accommodations.
- Make suggestions for appropriate academic accommodations.
- Contact OSWD on questions regarding a student's accommodations.
- Refuse to provide an accommodation, academic adjustment, or auxiliary aids not approved by OSWD.

- Identify a testing site other than OSWD as long as accommodations meet the student's needs.

Faculty have the Responsibility to:

- Ensure that each course, viewed in its entirety, is accessible in regard to content, texts and materials, assessment method, on-line instruction, and team requirements.
- Support and implement reasonable accommodations as identified in the student's Faculty Accommodations Letter.
- Consult with OSWD if requests conflict with course objectives or requirements.
- Maintain confidentiality. Faculty are encouraged to meet with the OSWD student privately to discuss disability issues. Such issues should not be openly discussed in class.
- Submit book lists to the bookstore as early as possible.
- Include an announcement on the syllabus directing students to OSWD if they need accommodations related to a disability.
- Submit books and class materials to OSWD for alternative formats, i.e., Braille, large print, raised line drawings, and eBooks.
- Fill out and submit special testing service request forms to allow the student to take an exam at the OSWD testing site.