# SJSU | ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION CENTER



**Accessible Education Center**

The Accessible Education Center (AEC) is responsible at SJSU for verifying disability(ies) and prescribing the appropriate accommodations. The University must comply with federal and state laws, and the California State University policies require the prompt delivery of reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities.

## Accommodation Process

Students with disabilities are not required to register with the AEC. If a student wishes to be considered for academic accommodations based on a disability, it is the student's responsibility to register with the AEC to be considered for academic accommodations. Registration steps and application are available on AEC's Registration page.

*What should instructors do?*

- Read instructor Notification Letters thoroughly.
- When applicable, discuss students' accommodations and how they will be implemented with them. AEC encourages instructors and students to connect each semester to discuss accommodations.
- Refer students who request accommodations without a Faculty Notification Letter to the AEC. Inform the student that course accommodations due to disabilities are determined by the AEC, not the instructor.
- Be aware changing course mode is not conducive to the administration of prescribed accommodations. **In the event the AEC is unable to provide accommodations due to these unpublished changes, the university and the instructor of record will be out of compliance and will be held accountable.** The following Distance Learning Accommodated Exams flow chart provides a guide for navigating SJSU online proctoring tools for accommodated exams.
- Contact the AEC immediately if you have any questions and/or concerns regarding how to provide a student's accommodations.

## MyAEC instructor Portal

Instructors can view a list of all students with accommodations in the courses they are teaching via the MyAEC instructor Portal. The instructor Portal allows professors to manage the requested accommodations for all courses and all students in one place.

## Confidentiality

The CSU Chancellor's Office has designated the AEC as the repository of all disability documentation for students with disabilities. Documentation stating and describing a student's disability is confidential information.

All information and communication regarding students and their disabilities must be maintained as confidential and treated as such.

*What should instructors do?*

- Instructors only need to know what accommodations are appropriate and necessary to meet the student's disability related needs. Instructors are not allowed to request disability documentation from students. Students are not required to disclose the nature of their disability or to submit copies of disability documentation to instructors. Should a student provide instructors with disability related documentation, they should not accept it or read it. Instructors should refer the student to the AEC.
- If instructors feel they need support in facilitating a student's learning, they may contact the AEC.

## Accessible Instructional Materials

Print material and electronic media used as instructional or supplemental material, and/or online assignments posted to the Web, which includes Learning Management Systems (LMS), must be accessible to allow full participation in your course.

The AEC will provide required course reading materials such as course readers, textbooks, lab manuals, etc. as requested by the student in an alternative format. The [Center for Faculty Development](#) (CFD) has posted tips and best practices for the creation of accessible documents and PowerPoints on their website. The CFD also provides training and other resources.

*What should instructors do?*

- Along with the various learning styles, students registered with AEC may have learning and reading disabilities that make it difficult for them to read and keep up, so be patient and flexible.  They are doing their best to keep up with the rest of the course.
- One way of setting students up for success is to choose accessible course materials.  Post PDFs that are already accessible.  One way to check is to ensure that the text in a PDF is selectable and not a scanned image.
- Let students know that AEC has computers and accessible technology specifically for students with disabilities.

## Captioning and Accessible Technology

In compliance with the California State University (CSU) system-wide Accessible Technology Initiative (ATI), which promotes Universal Design, all electronic media must be captioned. Electronic media (i.e., audio and/or video media or television recorded programing) used to supplement curriculum or instructional materials and/or online assignments posted to the Web, which includes Learning Management Systems (LMS), must be accessible to persons with disabilities in order to provide them with effective communication. (*Presidential Directive 2007-02) Communication should be, to the extent possible, as effective for persons with disabilities as it is for persons without disabilities. For deaf or hard-of-hearing students to receive equal access and fully participate in curriculum requirements electronic media must be captioned. Also, please be aware that although YouTube may state their streams are captioned, most often the existing captions are not accurate. Accessibility standards require a minimum accuracy rate of 90% for captions. This information applies all modes of course instruction.

*What should instructors do?*

- For students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, contact AEC's DHOH Program to make arrangements for live online captioning, [aec-dhoh@sjsu.edu](mailto:aec-dhoh@sjsu.edu).
- Contact the Center for Faculty Development, [CFD@sjsu.edu](mailto:CFD@sjsu.edu) regarding captioning prerecorded materials support.
- For synchronous courses (require remote captioning) it is best to use Zoom. Zoom requires a link where the instructor (host) accepts the Captioner. Close captioning must be turned on and assigned Captioner should be already be in place, secured by the DHOH Program.

# Working with Students with Disabilities

Talking to instructors about limitations/accommodations can be intimidating and stressful for students. Many students worry about how instructors will perceive and respond to them.

This section provides some best practices for working with students with disabilities:

*Communication*

- Encourage - Invite students to contact you if they have questions or need support.
- Normalize - Include the AEC in your syllabus and first day of instruction each semester.
- Empathize - Listen to students' challenges/concerns and respond kindly. Get to know individual students' strengths and challenges.
- Support - Refer students to relevant resources. This helps students feel supported and cared for, even if you cannot help with course-specific concerns.
- Be specific- Present information clearly and concisely, especially on topics such as course learning outcomes, requirements/expectations, due dates, and office hours.
- Avoid assumptions - Do not assume students with the same disabilities/limitations are all the same, although they may experience similar learning challenges.
    - This is especially helpful when working with students on the autism spectrum, who are often heavily stereotyped.
- Ask students how you can best support them.

    - "What can I do to help you?  To support you?"
    - "What challenges are you facing with _____?"
    - "How do you learn best?"
    - "How do you best demonstrate your knowledge of information?"

*Universal Design Learning or Universal Design Instruction*

Make your courses as accessible as possible ahead of time, not just when a need arises. This helps students feel supported and reduces barriers to learning. This is called *Universal Design.*

- Engagement
    - Create interest through connecting past and present events, themes, and ideas making course content more relevant.
- Representation
    - Present course content in different formats (e.g. auditory, visual, hands on, group discussions, captions).
- Action
    - Allow students multiple means to present knowledge of course content which supports their strengths.

- Universal Design Resources:
    - **Accessibility and Inclusive Teaching Overview**
    - **UDL Guidelines - Educator Worksheet**
    - **Inclusive Course Design checklist**

*Inclusivity*

Some word choices can unintentionally stigmatize or exclude students with disabilities. Here are some simple ways to use inclusive language:

- Avoid condescending euphemisms like "differently-abled," "challenged," and "handi-capable."
- Avoid referring to people without disabilities as "normal" or "healthy."
- Try to use the same language students use to describe themselves and their disabilities. For example, if a student refers to themselves as "a person on the autism spectrum" rather than "an autistic person," mirror their language as best you can when speaking to/about them.
- The above examples were taken from this guide. You can read through the guide to learn more about disability-inclusive language.

*Ability Redefined*