Faculty Guidebook
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Dear Faculty,

The Office of AccessABILITY Services (OAS) is here to partner with you in providing access to the classroom and your curriculum. Providing equal opportunities for students with disabilities at Guttman Community College is a campus-wide responsibility and commitment.

While OAS is responsible for processing requests for accommodations and ensuring that reasonable and appropriate accommodations are provided, we are all responsible, as an institution and as a community, for accommodating students with disabilities and creating an environment in which all students are given the opportunity to succeed. OAS serves as a resource for faculty and staff who work with students with disabilities. We are available to answer questions, consult on challenging situations, provide information, and lend support for accommodating students with disabilities. By working together, we can ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of our community.

This guide has been created as a quick resource to assist you in working with students with disabilities. It is by no means comprehensive—you will not find an answer for every single, individual situation that you may encounter in your work with our students. This is only meant to be a starting point and a reference, just one source for you to utilize. Furthermore, this guide is intended to be specific and catered to Guttman. If after reading this guide, you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

We hope that this guide will provide greater transparency into the running of the Office of AccessABILITY Services and foster greater collaboration between us so that we can support our students as effectively as possible.

Sincerely,

Crystal Vazquez
Associate Director, Office of AccessABILITY Services

Kristopher Robinson
Neurodiversity Advisor, Office of AccessABILITY Services
WHAT DOES OAS DO?

The Office of AccessABILITY Services (OAS) provides and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, while striving to increase the level of disability awareness among all members of the Guttman community. Through advocacy and collaboration, OAS fosters an accessible and inclusive community where students with permanent and temporary disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of campus life. We facilitate student learning and access through a variety of support services and partnerships with students, faculty, and staff within the Guttman Community.

The Office of AccessABILITY Services offers the following general and specialized services to the Guttman community:

General services for students

- Pre-admission and pre-enrollment planning
- Disability management and advocacy counseling
- Notification to professors of student registration with OAS (only upon student request)
- Tutoring in specialized subjects
- One-to-one instruction on academic success skills such as time management, organization, and planning
- Assistive technology training (e.g., notetaking tools, text-to-speech software, etc.)
- Use of the assistive technology stations located in the Information Commons, laptops, and all computer spaces
- CUNY LEADS (Linking Employment, Academics, and Disability Services) career preparation and guidance services
- Referral to NYS ACCES-VR (Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation)
- Specialized individual or group orientation to campus

Specialized services (potential accommodations) for students include:

- Testing accommodations (e.g., extended time, distraction-reduced testing environment)
- Note-taking assistance
- Readers
- Scribes
- Sign language interpreters
- Assistive listening devices
- Real-time captioning services (continued on next page)
• Assistance in receiving books on tape
• Document conversion; books and other course materials in alternate formats (e.g., enlarged, Braille, computer disk and other audio formats)
• Other academic accommodations, adjustments, and auxiliary aides to minimize barriers as deemed reasonable and appropriate

For staff and faculty

• Use of the assistive technology stations located in the Information Commons, laptops, and all computer spaces
• Advice on classroom accommodations
• Consultation regarding student access or creating accessible instructional materials
• Individual consultation on an as needed basis in regards to questions and concerns via one-on-one meetings, phone, or e-mail
• Campus-wide trainings
• Group instructional team meeting visits
• Professional development workshops and activities
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RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND OAS

Faculty at Guttman have the right to:

- maintain the College’s academic standards and integrity
- request or ask the student to complete the accommodation process before providing accommodations
- consult with OAS about the selection of equally effective and appropriate accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids
- deny a request for an accommodation if the student has not presented verification of having been approved for such accommodation by OAS
- be advised of how classroom and testing accommodations will be made (i.e. by the instructor vs. with OAS)
- refuse to provide an accommodation, academic adjustment, and/or auxiliary aids that is/are inappropriate or unreasonable because they may:
  - pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others
  - constitute a substantial change or alteration to an essential element of a course or program
  - pose undue financial or administrative burden on the university
- Note: If a professor has concerns about an accommodation that they feel fits into one or more of these criteria, they should first contact OAS who can and will liaise with the 504/ADA Coordinator and the President as appropriate

Faculty at the Guttman have the responsibility to:

- inform students with disabilities of the procedures for requesting accommodations
  - include reasonable accommodation information on all course syllabi (see page 8)
- ensure that the College’s courses, programs, services, and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings
- refer students to OAS as appropriate
- make yourself available to students to discuss accommodations, clarify information, and recommend ways to secure tutors
- maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities except when disclosure is required by law or authorized by the student
- provide all students with a syllabus or textbook requirements in advance of the beginning of class to allow students who need to make arrangements to get the texts in an accessible format the time to do so
• when requested by OAS, communicate with and advise OAS on materials required for your course in the case that OAS needs to make arrangements to make sure material is accessible for students who need it

• consult with OAS when unsure of how to proceed with a requested accommodation from a student who has registered with OAS

• collaborate with OAS in providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and auxiliary aids for students with disabilities upon a timely request from the student

Students with disabilities at Guttman have the right to:

• equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities available through the University

• reasonable, appropriate, and effective accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids determined on an individual basis

• appropriate confidentiality of all information pertaining to his/her disability with the choice of whom to disclose their disability to except as required by law

• University (including but not limited to classroom materials) information reasonably and readily available in accessible formats

Students with disabilities at Guttman have the responsibility to:

• meet the College’s qualifications and essential technical, academic, and institutional standards

• identify themselves in a timely manner as an individual with a disability when seeking an accommodation

• provide documentation from an appropriate source that verifies the nature of the disability, functional limitations, and the need for specific accommodations

• follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids as outlined by OAS

• Present verification of registration with OAS when requesting granted accommodations

• Inform OAS when there is an issue with their existing accommodations or they are in need of additional accommodations
The Office of AccessABILITY Services (OAS) has the right to:

- maintain the University's academic standards
- request current documentation from a student completed by an appropriate professional source to verify the need for reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments
- discuss a student's need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his/her documentation with the student's signed consent authorizing such discussion
- select among equally effective and appropriate accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids in consultation with students with disabilities
- deny a request for accommodation or academic adjustment if the documentation does not identify a specific disability, the documentation fails to verify the need for the requested service(s), or the documentation is not provided in a timely manner
- refuse to provide an accommodation, academic adjustment, and/or auxiliary aids that is/are inappropriate or unreasonable because they may:
  - pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others
  - constitute a substantial change or alteration to an essential element of a course or program
  - pose undue financial or administrative burden on the University
  - be a service (such as a personal attendant) or device (such as a wheelchair) of a personal nature

The Office of AccessABILITY Services (OAS) has the responsibility to:

- work to ensure that University courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings
- provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities and assure its availability in accessible formats upon request
- provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and auxiliary aids for students with disabilities upon a timely request by the student
- maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities except when disclosure is required by law or authorized by the student
- inform students with disabilities of College policies and procedures for filing a formal grievance with the 504/ADA Coordinator or through external agencies (e.g. Office of Civil Rights)
SENSITIVITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Disability-related information is confidential. While students requesting services in the classroom must disclose their disability status and become registered with the Office of AccessABILITY in order to receive accommodations, they are NOT obligated to reveal their diagnosis or the nature of their limitations to their instructors. Some students may choose to tell their instructors but do not wish to discuss the specifics. Because of the stigma attached to disabilities, some students may not register with the Office of AccessABILITY Services at all. Here are some ways to address and engage students, along with some tips in helping students be more comfortable:

**Do**

- Include a syllabus statement providing students with information on how to request accommodations through OAS. See below for a sample version of what to include on your syllabus
- Refer students to OAS if they have questions about accommodations
- Respect the privacy of students with disabilities. If students wish to meet with you and discuss their accommodations, make sure to do it in a place where a comfortable dialogue can take place

**Don’t**

- Ask personal questions about a student’s disability if they choose to disclose to you.
- Ask students to explain why they need an accommodation.
- Share information about a student with a disability with other faculty, students, or staff
- Make assumptions about a student’s disability status or capability to engage in academic or experiential coursework

**Some other things to keep in mind:**

- Refrain from making reference to your knowledge of the student’s disability in public settings as the student may be uncomfortable with others learning of the disability.
- Not all Guttman students with qualified disabilities register with the Office of AccessABILITY Services.
- Under ADA/504, students with disabilities are protected from discrimination, so making an extra effort to ensure the proper sensitivity and confidentiality toward them is not only beneficial for the students, but also required as staff at the institution.

**SAMPLE SYLLABUS STATEMENT**

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Guttman Community College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room 506 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call 646-313-8061 or speak to your Student Success Advocate or Career Strategist.
ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES

Referring Students to OAS

The Office of AccessABILITY Services (OAS) is the first place a student should be referred to when a disability has been disclosed to an administrator, instructor, or faculty member. For suggestions on how to refer a student to OAS who has not disclosed a disability, please consult with Crystal Vazquez, Associate Director of OAS. Never outright ask a student about their disability or the potential existence of disability.

Below are some indicators that a learning disability may exist:

- there is a discrepancy between quality of homework and class discussion vs. test scores
- the student fails to finish exams but performs well on the portion they do finish
- there are letter or number reversals in their written work
- content of written work is acceptable; however, there are many grammatical and spelling errors
- the student reports that it takes an excessive amount of time to read material
- the student reads questions but cannot understand what is being asked, but when question is read to them they can easily answer.

A referral to OAS may be appropriate if a student discloses any of the following:

- Receiving academic accommodations (such as extended time on exams) in the past
- Recently received a new medical diagnosis
- Experienced a recent hospitalization or medical crisis
- Experiencing side effects due to medication

If a student discloses a disability but does not mention they are registered with OAS, you may articulate a referral in the following way:

“You mentioned (a medical condition, learning disability, depression)…have you been to the Office of AccessABILITY Services?

If a student does not disclose a disability, but you believe they may benefit from getting in touch with the Office of AccessABILITY Services, you may refer them indirectly by providing a list of appropriate campus supports that includes the Office of AccessABILITY Services, such as the Office of Wellness, their SSA/Career Strategist, Peer Mentoring Meet-Ups, Tutoring, or any other Guttman service as applicable.

Registering with OAS

As mentioned earlier, the Office of AccessABILITY at Guttman has established a procedure for accommodating students with disabilities who self-identify to the office. Accommodations are determined on an individual basis. OAS believes that the student is the most valuable resource for determining which accommodations will provide equal access. The process is as follows:
1. The student discloses their disability status to Guttman staff or faculty and is referred to the OAS or the student contacts the OAS directly

2. The student submits appropriate documentation of their disability, meets with an OAS staff member, and completes the intake process. During the intake process, OAS will inform the student of their responsibilities and the proper procedures for them to go about requesting and utilizing their granted accommodations as needed

3. The OAS office determines reasonable and appropriate accommodations and provides student with an accommodation card that lists their granted accommodations

4. The student is then responsible for notifying their professors of their accommodations by presenting their accommodations card. Students are encouraged to meet with their professors to discuss the application of their accommodations within a professor’s specific course. OAS is available to help facilitate this process and provide consultation and guidance as needed

5. It is the joint responsibility of the student, OAS, and faculty to arrange for the accommodations that have been approved by OAS

Students may begin the registration process with OAS in one of three ways:

1. In-person: Visiting 207M or 506B
2. E-mail: accessibilityservices@guttman.cuny.edu
3. Phone: (646) 313-8256
Testing Accommodations Process and Procedures

Students who wish to utilize testing accommodations, such as extended time for exams, a distraction-reduced testing environment, use of a reader, etc, must first complete the following steps:

1. **Complete** the registration process with OAS

2. **Show** their instructor their accommodation card verifying their accommodations through OAS

3. **Submit** their request for testing accommodations through Starfish using the “Raise Your Hand” feature **5 business days before the exam**, (not including Saturday and Sunday).

Once OAS receives a properly submitted request for testing accommodations through Starfish, OAS will schedule the student’s exam. An AccessABILITY Services representative will contact faculty via email regarding exam instructions and delivery method. In this e-mail, we will remind instructors of the accommodations the student receives and ascertain necessary information required for the administration of the exam.

Students who wish to reschedule an exam due to an extreme circumstance must provide documentation to the office. Please be advised it is at the direction of the faculty to reschedule exams. To protect the academic integrity of the exam we may ask faculty to submit an alternative exam for the student at the faculty member’s discretion.

During the intake process, OAS informs students of their responsibilities in requesting and utilizing their testing accommodations, which includes:

1. Notifying the Office of AccessABILITY Services of any changes regarding the scheduled examination. OAS will confirm any changes with the instructor.

2. Notifying OAS if they will be late or if they are sick or unable to take the scheduled examination, knowing that make-up exams will only be given with the permission of the instructor.

3. Following all procedures for testing accommodations in order to ensure the integrity of the examination and testing accommodations.

4. Not using any mobile phone, smartphone, the Internet, or any other unapproved technological devices during the exam

5. Arriving at their scheduled exam time (with any unexcused lateness potentially resulting in a deduction from their extended time or a rescheduling of the exam only with the instructor’s permission)

**Academic Integrity:** The Office of AccessABILITY is fully committed to upholding the College’s policy on academic integrity (see Campus Bulletin on page 75). When there is a question of a breach of academic integrity while a student is taking an exam, the exam will be stopped and the instructor will be informed of the incident. In addition, students may be referred to the Dean of Student Engagement for potential disciplinary action.
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT STRATEGIES

Although you will find support strategies for specific diagnoses below, unless a student chooses to disclose their disability to you or their disability is readily apparent, (ex. a student with a mobility impairment who uses a wheelchair or a blind student who uses a walking stick), you will not know what a student’s particular disability is or be aware of any functional limitations they may have as a result of their disability(ies). We encourage the following to help you in instances when a student discloses to you or in instances when they do not. Regardless of whether or not you know what a student’s disability is, it is always helpful to ask the student what may work best for them in the classroom and provide multiple presentations of information. Remember to never ask a student about anything disability-related.

FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
- Include a disability accommodation and accessibility-related statement in your syllabus
- Face the class when speaking
- Think proactively about accessibility when considering and planning classroom projects, fieldwork, or lab projects
- Consider providing a summary of content delivered via lecture before (or after) class – allowing students to “fill-in” his/her classroom lecture notes
- Provide materials in a variety of ways – printed, e-mail, audio, etc. as applicable
- Use accessible web pages without drop-down menus, graphics are described, etc.
- Provide materials (names of textbooks, etc.) early to allow enough time for students to obtain them in the format accessible for them
- Use simple consistent formatting for all course materials
- Provide prompting during class activities with immediate feedback
- Describe assignments orally and in writing
- Provide due dates in your syllabus, with clearly defined goals and expectations
- Use videos that are captioned
- Fluctuate instructional methods by providing illustrations, handouts, auditory, and visual aids
- **Meet personally with students who have disclosed.** When a student presents you with the proper documentation from OAS stating they are eligible to receive accommodations, consider asking them to meet with you. This allows you to explain your teaching style and learn about what works for them. A meeting also breaks the ice and puts the student more at ease with you.
- **Prepare ahead of time.** Learn as much prior to class about support services for these students. Find out what is available on campus by contacting the Office of AccessABILITY Services.
- **Be aware of your actions.** Your actions and attitudes toward students with disabilities will be observed by all students in class. You have an opportunity to create an atmosphere of classroom support by being understanding.
Students with Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities come in various forms and every student will have individual styles of processing information even if they have the same diagnosis (ex. two students with dyslexia may not learn the same). What works best for one student with a learning disability may not work as well for another. These general suggestions are meant to provide guidance that may help to support students in working with your academic material.

- Present material in a variety of ways, not just through the lecture method. Consider visual aids, hands-on materials, lectures, videotapes, computer-enhanced instruction, etc. This will allow students to use whatever their strengths are in processing materials.
- Allow students to reveal what they have retained in a variety of ways, not simply through paper-and-pencil tests. Consider student presentations, long-term projects, small group presentations, term papers, individual oral testing, etc.
- Consider e-mailing or posting class notes or an outline of key concepts online before classes.
- Post major due dates for assignments and tests in the same spot in the classroom each week, even though they are indicated in the syllabus. Explain to students at the beginning of the semester where they will be posted and that it is their responsibility to note these deadlines.

When lecturing
- Use advance organizers. That is, explain what you will be discussing, how it fits into the previous lesson, and why it is relevant to students before proceeding with the lecture. This sets the stage for learning.
- Provide an outline (e.g., in a handout, on an overhead projector, or on a Web site) so students will be able to clearly see the structure of the lesson and know what to expect.
- Emphasize key concepts by slowing down and repeating them when they are introduced.
- Use a variety of media in presenting lessons. Consider hands-on objects whenever possible - charts, videotapes, audio clips, hand-outs of key concepts, etc.
- Pause and ask questions throughout, rather than just at the end. Give students time to ask clarifying questions.

Work done outside the classroom
- Leave time in class for students to begin their homework so that they can ask questions if they become confused.
- Only require students to practice work for homework that has been covered in class.
- Ensure that students do assigned readings by requiring them to do something active with the text. (Examples: answer questions to be turned in at the beginning of the next class period; write questions for each chapter to be given to fellow students at the beginning of the next class period; take a short quiz covering key concepts at the beginning of the next class, etc.)
- Suggest tutoring if needed and clearly explain how students can avail themselves of that service.

Small group work
- Establish ground rules to ensure all students participate and are held accountable.
- Consider a group grade, so that students on each team work together.
- Interact with groups as they work to keep discussions focused and efficient.
- Have team members grade each other on participation and contributions to ensure even more accountability.
Types of Learning Disabilities

1. Dyslexia
   a. Definition: Difficulty reading
   b. Functional limitations: Problems reading, writing, spelling, and speaking

2. Dyscalculia
   a. Definition: Difficulty with math
   b. Functional limitations: Problems doing math problems, understanding time, and using money

3. Dysgraphia
   a. Definition: Difficulty with writing
   b. Functional limitations: Problems with handwriting, spelling, and organizing ideas

4. Dyspraxia (Sensory Integration Disorder)
   a. Definition: Difficulty with fine motor skills
   b. Functional limitations: Problems with hand-eye coordination, balance, and manual dexterity

5. Dysphasia/Aphasia
   a. Definition: Difficulty with language
   b. Functional limitations: Problems understanding spoken language, poor reading comprehension

6. Auditory Processing Disorder
   a. Definition: Difficulty hearing differences between sounds
   b. Functional limitations: Problems with reading comprehension and language

7. Visual Processing Disorder
   a. Definition: Difficulty interpreting visual information
   b. Functional limitations: Problems with reading, math, maps, charts, symbols, and pictures
Students with ADHD
Like those with learning disabilities (LD), students with ADHD have a wide variety of strengths and challenges that may or may not stem from their diagnosis. Strategies for supporting students with LD may mirror strategies for supporting students with ADHD, although ADHD is not considered to be a learning disability. Though ADHD is not a learning disability, it can still potentially make learning difficult.

ATTENTION DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER
- Keep instructions as brief and uncomplicated as possible.
- Allow the student to tape-record lectures.
- Clearly define course requirements, the dates of exams, and when assignments are due; provide advance notice of any changes.
- Provide handouts, visual aids, and hands-on activities in class.
- Use more than one way to demonstrate or explain information.
- Have copies of syllabus ready in advance of the first day of class for distribution to students
- Break information into small steps when teaching many new tasks in one lesson (state objectives, review previous lessons, summarize periodically).
- Allow time for clarification of directions and essential information.
- Provide study guides or review sheets for exams.
- Provide alternative ways for the students to do tasks, such as dictations or oral presentations.
- Provide assistance with proofreading written work.
- Stress organization and ideas rather than mechanics when grading in-class writing assignments. Allow the use of spell check and grammar-assistive devices.
- When in doubt about how to assist the student, ask him or her.

The ADHD Brain vs. The Non-ADHD Brain: Addressing Misconceptions

ADHD Brain
- Frequently, ADHD traits have been with a person with ADHD since before they can remember. Most do not recall a time of not being this way.
- ADHD issues are always present, no matter the environment or situation. It may get a bit “better” once in a while, but it never “disappears.” It will continue to persist because it is a real brain difference.
- ADHD is not “just laziness” or “a moral weakness” or “a lack of self-discipline!” Most have to work 3 to 5 times harder to get half as much done.
- Hyper-focus is a real phenomenon in ADHD. It is not typically controllable.

Non-ADHD Brain
- Most who are neurotypical can choose when it is “time to focus” on a particular task. They ordinarily cannot relate to the all-consuming experience of hyper-focus and having no control over shifting their own focus.
- Non-ADHD individuals can have some “ADHD-like” traits at times, but they typically resolve with a change of environment or situation (getting sleep, stress, hunger, illness, major life events, being at home versus being at a party, etc)
- Most people can quickly and easily organize and prioritize daily tasks and then have time to spare in comparison to those with ADHD.
**Students on the Autism Spectrum**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological disorder characterized by (1) difficulties with communication skills and (2) social interactions, as well as, (3) repetitious behavior patterns and interests. Students with autism tend to have communication deficits and may exhibit behaviors that can seem unorthodox, especially in a classroom or social setting. Responding inappropriately in conversations, misreading nonverbal interactions, or having difficulty building appropriate friendships are characteristics associated with ASD, as well as having strict, rigid routines, being sensitive to changes in their environment, or focusing intensely on items at inappropriate times.

ASD manifests itself differently in each person on the spectrum – as the saying goes, “If you’ve met one person with autism, you’ve met one person with autism.” People with ASD have a wide range of cognitive abilities; some have learning disabilities. Certain strategies, however, can aid you in providing a student with autism a rich academic experience that may best help them to thrive and succeed.

- Provide a specific schedule and prepare the student in advance for any changes in the class routine.
- Acknowledge and reinforce acceptable classroom behaviors.
  - Teach specific social rules/skills. Some students with ASD may not speak at all in class while others may speak more than appropriate for your classroom setting. Do not be afraid to set parameters in place for how often all students in class should speak or redirect a student when they go off topic.
- Provide concrete examples for abstract or complex topics.
  - Avoid vague questions such as “Why did you do that?”
- Allow students to communicate through multiple modes (i.e., e-mail, face-to-face).
- Give specific and detailed feedback on assignments and exams
- Assist student in assigning priority to assignments, including defining a start and finish
  - Describe and present specific presenting tasks in a sequential order
  - Use rubrics and very clear directions for projects and large assignments. Many students with ASD are notorious rule followers, so if the rule states that something must be done a certain way, then that is how it will be done
- Allow time for verbal responses
- Try not to take seemingly rude behavior personally
- Provide outlines for studying and exam preparation
- Ask follow up/check-in questions to ensure understanding
- Note that sarcasm and idioms may not be grasped by students on the spectrum
- When assigning group work, consider describing and assigning group roles so that all students are aware of teacher and group expectations. If roles are to be decided by the students, check in with them once the decisions are made to ensure that all students are clear on the expectations of each group member.
- Consider either offering a break for students during class or giving students the option to step out and take a break during class.
  - An active classroom can be overwhelming to some students and those on the spectrum may self-stimulate to soothe internal anxiety with behaviors that can seem strange. Understand that an increase in unusual or difficult behaviors probably indicates an increase in stress, in which case ask the student if would he or she like to talk with you
Potential Strengths and Challenges of Students on the Autism Spectrum

Strengths
- Attention to detail
- Often highly skilled in a particular area
- Deep study resulting in encyclopedic knowledge on areas of interest
- Tendency to be logical (helpful in decision-making where emotions may interfere)
- Less concern for what others may think of them (can be a strength and a challenge)
  - Also known as independent thinking – often results in novel “big picture” insights due to different ways of looking at things, ideas, and concepts
- Usually visual processing (thinking in pictures or video)
- Can be very verbal (propensity of giving detailed descriptions may be useful in providing direction to lost persons)
- Direct communication
- Loyalty
- Honesty
- Nonjudgmental listening
- Average to above average intelligence

Challenges
- Grasping the “big” picture
- Uneven set of skills
- Difficulty in developing motivation to study areas not of interest
- Difficulty perceiving emotional states of others
- Perceiving unwritten rules of social interaction (but can learn these rules though direct instruction and social narratives)
- Difficulty processing non-favorite modalities such as aural, kinesthetic, etc
- Difficulty parsing out and summarizing important information for a conversation
- Sensory integration problems where input may register unevenly, distorted, and difficulty in screening out background noise
- Generalization of skills and concepts
- Difficulty expressing empathy in ways that others expect or understand
- Executive functioning resulting in difficulties planning long-term tasks
Students with Hearing and Visual Impairments

When working with students who have hearing impairments (deaf/hard of hearing) or visual impairments (blind or visually impaired), making sure they have full and equitable access to all of Guttman’s programs and activities (both academic and non-academic in nature) is of the utmost importance. OAS is here to consult with you on how to make sure that your endeavors are fully accessible to these populations. Below are just a few suggestions to keep in mind in your work.

DEAF/HARD OF HEARING

- **Be tolerant.** Scheduling glitches may prevent deaf students and interpreters from arriving on time the first day.
- **Be visible and keep a clear line of sight.** Hard of hearing students without an interpreter will need to see the professor clearly. Deaf students must have a line of sight to interpreters. Be prepared to discuss appropriate seating areas with students and interpreters.
- **Talk to the student.** If a student uses an interpreter, you still should face the student when addressing him. The interpreter is a translator and does not necessarily have to look at your face. Talking to the interpreter will make the student feel like he is being left out.

VISUAL DISABILITIES

- **Let the Office of AccessABILITY Services know what course material you are using in advance in the case that OAS needs to help prepare materials in advance for the student.**
- **Create a list of books and tools you use over a semester. Share it with OAS so that they can get the material into alternative formats for blind students. Don't wait until the last minute, as it sometimes takes months to get material into an adaptive format.**
- **Do not assume that a blind student knows Braille.** Only a small percentage of students with visual impairments know and use Braille.
- **Do not assume that blind students have great technological skills.** A student who has been blind since birth probably has a better knowledge of alternative format technology than someone who recently lost his sight.
- When writing on the white board, be sure to say out loud what you're writing.
- **Consider the student with a visual impairment when you're showing a film in class.** If it's available, get a copy of the film in audio-described format. This allows the student to hear descriptions of important scenes.
- **When having classroom discussions, encourage all students to say their names before they talk.** This can help the student with a visual impairment keep up with the conversations.
Students with Medical Conditions (Chronic and Non-Chronic)
Communication and flexibility are essential when working with students with various medical conditions whether they are temporary or permanent. All medical documentation should be handled by the Office of AccessABILITY Services. Correspondence about working to provide access to courses, to the greatest extent possible, can then be facilitated between OAS, the student, and the instructor.

HEALTH/MEDICAL IMPAIRMENTS
• Allow students extended time to finish assignments and/or develop work they can do at home if they are hospitalized or unable to attend class due to illness.
• Consider priority seating, allowing students to sit near the doors or at the back of the class so they can leave.
• Discuss with the students in advance if they will need frequent breaks from class. If so, work out an arrangement ahead of time.
• Consult the Office of AccessABILITY Services. If you've been told about a student's medication, be aware of how that medication will impact him.
• Depending on the impairment, you'll need to look at how your classroom is set up. You may need to improve the lighting or work with disability services to provide a comfortable chair.
• You may want to reconsider rules about eating or drinking in class.
• Give out as much written material as possible to augment lectures.
• Consider discussing any potential attendance issues with the student and evaluating attendance requirements as necessary for course completion.

Students with Mobility Impairments

MOBILITY DISABILITIES
• Make sure your classroom and the path to it is accessible. If not, work with your administrators to ensure accessibility.
• Think in advance about field trips. Make the calls necessary to ensure that the site is accessible. Assess the purpose of the trip and ask yourself: How can I maximize this experience for all students?
• Make sure all equipment in the classroom is within the student's reach.
• Allow students to tape-record the class.
• Consider allowing students to do verbal reports, instead of written ones.
• Provide course materials in electronic format.
• Sit down if you plan on speaking with a student who uses a wheelchair for more than a couple of minutes.
• Allow the use of adaptive technology for tests and classroom work.
• If the student is often late to class, discuss the situation with him and work with him and/or OAS to find a solution.
• Allow students to make class presentations from their seats instead of coming to the front of the room.
• Work with the proper campus officials and students to develop an escape plan in case of an emergency.
**Students with Psychological Disabilities**

Students with psychological disabilities (may include bipolar, major depression, anxiety disorders, PTSD, schizophrenia, OCD, and others) may experience medication side effects, difficulty concentrating, panic or anxiety during exams, lack of sleep, disorientation, inability to remember facts, depressed moods, flashbacks, and difficulty taking notes, among other impairments that affect their ability in the classroom.

Note: OAS does not provide mental health or psychological counseling services. If you have a student who you believe is exhibiting any of the above symptoms or going through some kind of distress, please make a referral to the Office of Wellness. The Wellness Office provides free, confidential, short-term mental health counseling to students. For more information, contact Courtney Stevenson, Associate Director of Counseling Services and Wellness Clinician at (646) 313-8165 or e-mail wellness@guttman.cuny.edu

The below suggestions may help you assist all students who may be experiencing psychological and mental health-related difficulties.

- Provide regular feedback on academic work.
- Use detailed statements on your syllabus and note that "individuals with psychological, learning, physical or sensory disabilities needing accommodations can schedule a meeting with . . ."
- Consider allowing written assignments in lieu of oral presentations, or vice versa.
- Be flexible in allowing students to complete assignments or exams when hospitalized.
- Consider priority seating, allowing the student to sit near the door or at the back of the class so students can quickly leave if they need to. Consider providing a seat away from a window or doorway to reduce distractions.
- Discuss with the student if they will need frequent breaks from class. If so, work out an arrangement ahead of time.
- Consult the Office of AccessABILITY Services. If a student has told you about their medication, be aware of how that medication will impact the student.
- Stand close, but don't crowd his/her space when talking with the student.
- Be sure to maintain eye contact when talking to the student.
- Convey interest, concern and alertness through body posture and facial expression.
- Monitor group work. Be sure everyone is involved when you break into small groups. If someone is trying to do all the work and is also experiencing a mental health problem, it will cause them anxiety.
- Remember, you don't need specialized knowledge to help a student through a rough time.
- Ignore behaviors that while not ordinary, are not disruptive. If you are concerned, submit a BIT referral.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is neurodiversity?**
   - Neurodiversity is a concept and an approach to learning and mental health that purports that diverse neurological conditions are the result of normal variations in the human genome. Neurodiversity supports that neurological differences are to be recognized and respected as any other human variation. These differences can include those labeled with Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyscalculia, Autistic Spectrum, Tourette’s Syndrome, and others.

2. **What can I do to make my classroom more accessible?**
   - When developing and implementing your curriculum, consider the following areas for accessibility
     - Syllabus with disability statement and contact information for OAS
     - Early notification of required course texts and materials
     - Internet resources – blogs, articles, etc.
     - Videos, DVDs, and other multimedia sources
     - Classroom furniture and walkways, course websites, clickers
     - Exams and quizzes, lecture notes, study guides, handouts

3. **Is there a specific timeline student must follow to register with AccessABILITY Services?**
   - Accommodations can be requested at any point during a semester. However, we strongly encourage students to set up accommodations at the beginning of the semester.

4. **Can I provide accommodations to students on my own in the classroom without permission from AccessABILITY Services?**
   - Accommodations should not be made for a student who has not provided appropriate documentation to The Office of AccessABILITY Services. The Office of AccessABILITY Services is the only office designated to review documentation of a disability and determine eligibility for specific accommodations.
5. Will providing accommodations make an unfair advantage for students registered with OAS over other students?
   - Reasonable accommodations do not weaken academic standards or the overall integrity of the course. Accommodations provide students with disabilities equal access to the classroom and course materials. Students must meet the same academic and behavioral standards as other students, including deadlines and tardiness, unless there has been a prior arrangement based on the student’s approved accommodations.

6. What do I do if a student requests accommodation, but is not registered with OAS?
   - Instructors should refer a student to OAS if the student has requested accommodations but does not have an accommodation card. It is helpful for students to know ahead of time about the documentation and intake process.

7. A student has been missing classes due to a medical condition. What should I do?
   - When a student has a chronic health condition with acute episodes, modifications to class attendance policies may be appropriate and should be considered on an individual basis. The student still needs to meet the essential functions of the class (like everyone else), which may or may not include attendance in the classroom. Instructors should consider permitting make-up work when the absence is disability-related and falls within the parameters of the stated attendance policy. Any absences beyond the stated policy require a meeting with the instructor, student, and the Associate Director of OAS to assess if the student can meet the essential functions of the class.

8. What if I think an accommodation is unreasonable or not a right fit for my class?
   - Contact OAS for a consultation. If an accommodation compromises an essential element of your course content, you may seek an alternate way to give the student access to learning or opportunity to demonstrate that material was learned. If the accommodation creates an unreasonable burden, it might also be disallowed. Avoid confronting the student about the accommodation.

9. Should I evaluate students with disabilities any differently than I do the rest of the class?
   - All students, including those with disabilities, should be evaluated at the same level. The requested accommodations are not in place to give the student an extra advantage or to raise or lower academic expectations. Accommodations are designed to “level the playing field” and compensate for any deficits to the educational environment experienced by the student. Accommodations may present an alternative manner in which a student participates in your class or gains access to information.
CARE AND SAFETY

For Behavioral Concerns

Guttman Community College is concerned about the safety, health, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff community. As one facet of its outreach effort, the College’s Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) has been established to identify, assess, and monitor students displaying levels of distress, disruption, or behavioral dysfunction that might warrant timely intervention. The team’s primary goal is to provide threat assessments and early intervention before a crisis arises.

The Guttman BIT team typically meets monthly or as needed to identify conditions of concern and discuss how best to support distressed students. The team includes staff from the Office of Student Engagement, Judicial Affairs, Wellness, AccessABILITY Services, Legal Counsel, Academic Affairs, and Public Safety. When necessary, the team offers resources for timely intervention, treatment, referrals and follow-up for students in distress.

Anyone from the campus community who observes an emergency or imminent threat to self or others should contact Public Safety Department at extension 38101/212-221-4630 or 911 as appropriate. Instructions for submitting a Confidential Incident Report for the Behavioral Intervention Team can be found here: Instructions For Submitting BIT Report

Meet the Team

Tier I:
Charles. H. Pryor III, Chair
(Tier II)
Lori Fox, Acting Special Counsel
(Dean of Student Engagement)
Linda Merians, Chief Diversity Officer
Carolee Ramsay, Conduct Officer
Marcia Edwards, Faculty
Anastasia Koutsidis, Public Safety
Crystal Vasquez, AccessABILITY Services
Courtney Stevenson, Wellness

Objectives of BIT

- Recommend mandated psychological assessment and/or medical leave/withdrawal, when necessary, pursuant to CUNY’s Medical Withdrawal and Reentry Policy and procedures.

- Balance FERPA, HIPAA and counselor privilege with College need to know and emergency communication needs. Protect the campus community in cases of imminent threats by students, staff, and faculty to self and others.
**Behavioral Intervention Team – Protocol**

1. Report/referral generated through online form/e-mail
2. Additional information may be needed from reporter or others
3. NaBITA Assessment Tool is used to assess
4. Assessment made by Tier 1 (first responders). If non-emergency, appropriate response developed during regular meetings
5. Appropriate intervention is determined and action taken. Regular follow-ups and tracking
6. Feedback is provided (when appropriate for federal and state laws)

**Who Should I Tell?**

Report to Public Safety if…
1. Immediate safety concern (perceived as real threat)
2. Individual is a danger to him/herself or others

Report to Student Engagement if…
1. Classroom behavior that is of concern but is not threatening to the college community

Report to BIT Team if…
1. Behavior of a student is of concern but not in need of an immediate action and or response
   • A BIT report should be filed

**Classroom Behavioral Intervention Process**

- **Behavioral Observation**
  - Bring concerns to Instructional Team
  - Discuss with SSA

- **Classroom Incident**
  - Contact Public Safety for Immediate response
  - Contact OSE for an issue that is non-threatening

- **Public Safety/OSE**
  - Immediate action taken by Public Safety-removal of student/law enforcement actions/advanced medical care.
  - OSE-Behavioral Contract and/or Warning and/or Disciplinary Action
  - BIT Team Notification as needed/appropriate
COMMON ACCOMMODATIONS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS

- **1.5 Extended time for exams** - Student is allowed one and a half times (50% more time) the regular exam duration. For example if the regular duration is 60 minutes, then the 1.5 extended time accommodation would be 90 minutes (1 hour 30 minutes).

- **2.0x Extended time for exams** - Student is allowed double/two times (100% more time) the regular exam duration. For example if the regular duration is 60 minutes, then the 2.0 extended time accommodation would be 120 minutes (2 hours).

- **Distraction-reduced testing environment/separate testing location** - Students with disabilities may be approved for and request a separate “reduced distraction” testing space. This space may be a conference room, unused classroom, or instructor’s office. This accommodation is not a guarantee of a “distraction-free” testing space, but rather a quieter space where students have fewer distractions from fellow test-takers and are thus better able to maintain focus.

- **Assistive/adaptive technology** - services, equipment, and procedures that give students with disabilities access to learning and activities in the classroom environment

- **Alternate media/format/text** - Students may require course materials in alternate formats. Common alternate formats include enlarged texts, recorded texts, electronic texts or brailed course materials. OAS works with the student and the professor to provide an appropriate format for the student. Because alternative text production is sometimes a time consuming process, an OAS staff member may ask an instructor for information about course materials several weeks (or months) in advance.

- **Use of a calculator for exams** - This accommodation allows students to use a calculator as long as the calculator is unable to perform the functions that are being tested. This accommodation typically allows for the use of four-function calculator so that students who understand the concepts will not be penalized for errors in basic calculations. Instructors will approve the calculator to be used by the student.

- **Use of a reader for exams** - Readers are typically for students who are visually impaired, have specific reading disabilities, or processing difficulties. The test is read exactly as it is written

- **Use of a scribe for exams** - Scribes typically assist students who are physically unable to use arms and hands or who have limited fine motor function. They are instructed to write down exactly what is dictated to them by the student ONLY.

- **Use of a laptop for taking notes/in-class assignments** - Students who, because of a disability, have difficulty taking notes by hand may request permission to use a laptop in class. Laptops allow for greater speed in taking notes and thus may allow a student to keep pace with others in the class.

- **Use of a computer for exams** - Some students with disabilities will be approved for and request a computer for essay exams. Using a computer allows these students the opportunity to avoid physical fatigue and/or to provide legible, better-organized answers to essays. Students making such a request may use a computer provided by OAS or a personal computer that is pre-approved by the instructor. Computers provided by OAS allow for word processing and assistive technology programs without Internet access.

- **SmartPen** - a ballpoint pen with an embedded computer and digital audio recorder that captures handwriting and simultaneously records audio and synchronizes it to the handwriting; used as an assistive note-taking device

- **Permission to record lectures** – Students who have a disability that may, for example, impact processing information, may record lectures as an accommodation for their use
only. Students are required to sign the OAS Certification and Rules Governing Recording Lectures Form in order to utilize this accommodation, a copy of which will be provided to both the student and the professor. Students may use their own equipment, such as audio recorders, or Livescribe pens.

**FURTHER READING AND GUIDANCE**

Reasonable Accommodations: A Faculty Guide to Teaching Students with Disabilities

[CUNY's Guide to Reasonable Accommodations: A Faculty Guide to Teaching Students with Disabilities](#)

DO-IT – The Center For Universal Design in Education

[The Center for Universal Design in Education](#)