



SIENNA

OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY

A Faculty Guide to Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

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Who Are We? What Do We Do?

Lindsay Hennessey-Green, Director of Accessibility



lgreen@siena.edu

Lindsay oversees the Office of Accessibility. She is an advocate for students with disabilities on campus. Lindsay registers all students and allocates reasonable accommodations. If you have any questions or inquiries regarding the Office of Accessibility, please reach out to her.

Patti Smith, Assistant Director of Accessibility



psmith@siena.edu

Patti is the Assistant Director of Accessibility. She works with our students to develop academic planning that is individualized to the student. She advocates for each student to have the connection to campus resources.

Jen Newman, Learning Disabilities Specialist



jenewman@siena.edu

Jen is a learning specialist that meets with students to support them through their academic career. They work on organization and executive functioning skills. Jen is also is a test proctor

What is the Office of Accessibility?

Our office works to enhance the mission of Siena University and acts as a liaison for students with disabilities within the University community. The office ensures compliance with responsibilities and requirements under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and current amendments; and promotes advocacy for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are granted to students who have registered and provided current and relevant documentation of their disability and accommodation needs to the office.

Where are we located?

The Office of Accessibility is located in Hennepin 130B.

Accessibility Contact Information

Office: 518-783-4239

Fax: 518-782-6770

accessibility@siena.edu

Office Hours

Semester Hours

Monday- Friday 8:30am-4:30pm

Summer Hours

Monday- Thursday 8am-4:15pm,
Friday 8am-12pm

Testing Hours

Monday- Friday 8:45am-4:00pm

Accessibility Student Policies and Procedures

- [Accessibility Policy Handbook](#): This document outlines all procedures for students.
- [Accessibility How to Register Guide](#): Provides step by step instructions on what is needed to complete a request for accommodations and register with the Office of Accessibility.
- [Temporary Accommodations How to Register Guide](#): Instructions for students seeking temporary accommodations due to a temporary condition (concussions, broken limb, severe illness).
- [Accessibility Testing Accommodation Policy](#): Provides step by step instructions on how to submit a testing request.

Disability Laws and Confidentiality

Siena University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and thereafter Amendment Acts and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These laws prohibit discrimination based on disability as well as provide guidance on how to allocate reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. According to the ADA an individual with a disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. Each student is presented with an initialized interactive registration process to determine their eligibility for such accommodations. Disability information provided by a student in order to receive accommodations cannot be used for any reason beyond the scope of this purpose without informing the student of the additional possible use of the information. The Family Educational Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of and access to student educational records, including disability documentation. This means access to disability related documentation is restricted to the staff of the Office of Accessibility only. Section 504 and the ADA protect the student from discrimination with respect to the handling of medical records and disability documentation. The discussions regarding a student's disability status and use of accommodations should remain a confidential matter between the instructor, student, and if necessary the Office of Accessibility.

Self- Identification and Documentation

Students with disabilities are admitted to the University under the same criteria as other students. Students with disabilities are not obliged to disclose a disability during the admissions process, nor at any point during their tenure here. However, in order to qualify for accommodations, it is necessary for students with disabilities to self-identify and submit disability documentation to the Office of Accessibility. Students who request accommodations must submit to this office current and comprehensive disability documentation from a qualified practitioner. This confidential documentation remains on file with this office which will approve the use of accommodations when a student has made a direct request and has met disability documentation guidelines. Siena's documentation guidelines are adapted from guidance provided by the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). After reviewing the documentation, this office will then grant necessary accommodations based on the functional limitations of a student's condition.

Accommodation Allocation

Accommodations are modifications to a course, service, policy, procedure, activity, or facility that provide an individual with a disability an equitable opportunity to obtain the same benefits and privileges available to an individual without a disability. The University is obligated to make accommodations for known limitations of otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities. We are not obligated to provide accommodations that would alter the essential functions of a course of study or accommodations that are unduly burdensome to the University. Providing accommodations to ensure access is never done at the expense of the essential standards applied to all students. The determination of accommodations is made in a non-formulaic, case by case basis by the Director of the Office of Accessibility to ensure the individual needs of the student are met and equal access is being provided. The student with a disability should be actively involved in the process and may be provided with his or her first choice of accommodation or an alternative appropriate accommodation determined by the Office of Accessibility. Accommodations are determined by examining:

- the physical and/or programmatic barriers resulting from the interaction between the disability of the student and the course or program requirements or the campus environment;
- the possible accommodations that might remove the barriers;
- whether the student has equal access without accommodations;
- whether essential elements of the course, program of study, job, or activity will be fundamentally altered by the accommodations;
- whether the accommodations will result in an undue hardship for the University.

Example Accommodations

- Extended time on tests (including quizzes, midterms, and finals)
- Distraction-reduced testing space
- Audio or pdf versions of textbooks
- Note-taking assistance: Audio Notes- GENIO (formerly known as Glean) or Live Scribe SmartPen
- Alternative formats, such as large print or audio
- Use of a laptop computer in class and/or for tests and in-class assignments
- Spelling aids and/or calculators
- Assistive technology
- Absence Consideration
- Sign language interpreters and/or FM system
- Short breaks in class and monitored breaks on exams

Syllabi Statement

Each syllabus should contain a statement supporting the need for academic accommodations. Please insert the below statement into your syllabi.

The Office of Accessibility allocates reasonable academic accommodations to students with documented disabilities. If you need assistance due to a disability, please contact accessibility@siena.edu.

Accommodation Letters

It is the student's responsibility to request their semester accommodation letter each semester. The Office will email the student their PDF accommodation letter along with their instructors they are enrolled with on the first day of classes. It is student's responsibility to provide the letter to any instructor of course they add after the first day. The student should also provide the letter to their advisor, coach, etc. Each accommodation letter is valid for one semester. The Director of Accessibility will send an email with information on how to request the accommodation letter prior to the start of the semester. Accommodation letters states accommodations that each student is eligible for, **but it is the responsibility of the student to request each specific accommodation within a timely manner as stated in the [Student Policy Handbook](#), in order for the accommodation to be effectively allocated.** Please note that diagnoses are not revealed. The student and the Accessibility staff are the only parties who can speak to professors about accommodations. Parents or outside tutors are not to contact professors regarding their academic work.

"September 2, 2025
Fall 2025
CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Name is a student in your course who is registered with the Office of Accessibility. This student has been approved for and is entitled to the following accommodations:

- Time and a half on all timed assessments
- Distraction reduced location for all timed assessments

Accessibility will provide:

- Audio Notes- Genio
- Audiobooks
- Learning Specialist
- Absence Consideration- Student will notify professor and Accessibility

The Office of Accessibility ensures access for students with documented disabilities and is in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This Accommodation Letter is a notice that the student is eligible for such reasonable accommodations. If specific action is needed, the instructor will be notified by the office. It is the student's responsibility to request all testing accommodations at least 5 days prior to the assessment. Each instructor will be informed to complete the Testing Accommodation form via email. All software and devices are provided by the Accessibility office. Any updates to a student's approved accommodations will be provided in a new accommodation letter. Accommodations cannot be allocated retroactively.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have at 518-783-4239 or jgreen@siena.edu. More information can be found at siena.edu/offices/accessibility/faculty-resources/.

Office of Accessibility

Siena University
Hennepin 130B
518-783-4239
accessibility@siena.edu"

Faculty Role in Accommodation Letters

When a student presents an accommodation letter or the Office of Accessibility emails a copy to an instructor it is vital that the instructor keeps the letter and refers back to it when a student makes a request. The faculty member may speak with the student regarding the accommodations and how to assist the student effectively. The Office of Accessibility deems the accommodation reasonable and in compliance with the law; it is not the faculty member's role to question if the accommodation is needed or valid. If there is a particular concern regarding how to appropriately allocate the accommodation or if the accommodation is necessary for the course please reach out to the Office of Accessibility to inquire further and make a best course of action to appropriately and effectively accommodate the student to ensure access. Testing accommodations are listed first in the accommodation letter and the faculty will have to participate in the allocation of this accommodation. Please read the following policy for more information on how this operates. The accommodation letter will be separated with what the Office of Accessibility provides to the student. These accommodations do not directly involve the faculty but it is a notice that these accommodations are approved for the student and may be utilized in the classroom. If the Faculty member is directly responsible for providing an accommodation (alternative formatted material or early access to course material) it will be stated under the "Faculty will provide" section".

Testing Accommodations

All requests for testing accommodations (1.5x time, 2x time, Reader, Scribe, Computer on exams, etc.) must be submitted through the Office of Accessibility at **least 5 days prior to the date of quiz, test or exam**. Please note that extended testing time is only applicable to timed exams but if the need for a reader, scribe or computer is present, students may still submit a request for the specific assessment. All exams will be proctored by Office of Accessibility staff in our testing areas (Hennepin Testing Center). If an exam is rescheduled or canceled it is the student's responsibility to relay that information to the Office of Accessibility. If the student does not attend their scheduled time or is requesting to reschedule, it is the professor's decision on whether the student can reschedule the exam.

- Please review the [Student Testing Policy](#) and the [Faculty Testing Guide](#)
- Faculty are responsible for filling out the testing request via [Etrieve](#) after receiving it. Best practice is to complete this immediately as it ensures the student will get approved and a confirmation of their exam in a timely manner. Requests **must** be filled out at 2 days prior to the exam date. Submissions received within 2 days of the exam creates an issue with the Office of Accessibility efficiently scheduling the exam. Reminders for complete the request will be sent the day prior will be sent to the instructor.
- Exams should be sent to the Office of Accessibility at least 24 hours prior to the exam.
Emailing exams to the Office is best practice.
- All instructions for the exam (cheat sheet, blue book, etc.) must be included in the request.
- Instructors are asked to provide a contact number, this is to ensure that the Office can contact the instructor during the exam if there are any issues.
- Students may request the exam on a different day than the exam with your approval. It is the instructors responsibility to make sure the date the student is requesting matches with the date of the exam or prior approval they have received.

Testing Accommodations (continued)

- If a course has weekly quizzes, please have the student who is eligible for testing accommodations make special arrangements with Accessibility or find time during the Faculty member's office hours where this can be completed with their accommodations.
- The Office of Accessibility Testing Center hours are 8:45am- 4:00pm. If a student wants to request outside of Testing Center hours, they need to request permission.
- If the Office of Accessibility identifies any instances of cheating or Academic Dishonesty, the matter will be reported to Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. It is recommended that the faculty member also file an official report.
- Alternative arrangements for testing can occur if a student and faculty member agree on a time and location for the exam. This would be considered a favor by the faculty member to extend the testing time and not an official accommodation. If you have questions, you may consult with the Office of Accessibility.
- **Emailing exams and having Accessibility scan and email the exam back is best practice and preferred. If a professor would like to drop off or pick up an exam, they can do so in the Hennepin Testing Center.**

Audio Notes

Audio Notes are used to provide note taking assistance to students with disabilities. The Office of Accessibility has two options for this accommodation; LiveScribe SMART Pen and Genio. All Audio Notes users must be compliant with the *Audio Recording Policy* (see below). Faculty are notified of potential use of these technologies in the student's accommodation letter.

SMART Pen

A LiveScribe SMART Pen is a physical device that pairs with a specialized note book that allows a student to record class and engage with their notes after class. The audio pairs with the notebook and permits the notes to be linked in a comprehensive way.

Genio

Genio is web-ware assistive technology that uses audio recording, color coding, and typed notes to capture class lectures. This innovative technology allows for increased student independence and allows students to engage with their notes in a more comprehensive way.

Audio Recording Policy

Since Audio Notes uses recording as its main function, each student must be in compliance with the Audio Recording Policy. During each student's training, the policy must be signed and kept on file. At the end of each semester all recordings will be destroyed; notes can be kept for review. If the student is using Genio, the student will not have access to download or ever keep the audio. Please read the example policy below:

I, _____ have been provided by the Office of Accessibility, as an accommodation, Audio Recorder, LiveScribe SMART Pen, or GENIO to aide in my note-taking abilities. I understand the material is for my sole use only and shall not be redistributed in any way including sharing on the internet, with other students, or receiving any form of monetary compensation for sharing. I understand this device is on loan to me from the Office of Accessibility and failure to return it may result in a charge for the full cost of the device. I understand that I must alert the faculty member for each class in which I plan to use this device. Should any confidential or personal information be discussed in class, I agree to turn off the device. I understand that failure to follow these protocols could result in sanctions against me for violating policies concerning academic integrity.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology and Digital Accessibility is an important initiative in the Office of Accessibility. We offer Audio Notes, Alternative Formatted Material, and Natural Reader and can provide training on personal device accessibility tools. All use of computers in the classroom for Audio Notes or other uses of Assistive Technology will be stated on the accommodation letter. If a professor reports to the Office of Accessibility that the computer or device was used for any reason other than the ones approved, the accommodation will be revoked. Computer use on exams for typing will be permitted if requested by eligible students for long answer exams. All computers will have screen recording applied when students are typing.

Alternative Formatted Material

A student may require class material in a different format. The student would request such reformatting through the Office of Accessibility. This may be text to audio or text to HTML. Providing Alternative Formatted material may take up to three (3) business days. Some students may require that their professor sends them accessible (PDF or Word) documents 24 hours in advance so they can access those materials to be prepared for class. If any professor is having issues with making their course material accessible, please reach out to the Office of Accessibility or assistance or training.

Absence Consideration

Sometimes student's disabilities may affect their ability to uphold the attendance policy for a course in which they are enrolled. This accommodation must be listed on the Accommodation letter given to each professor from the student. A conversation with the student and the professor should take place discussing the number of absences that would be reasonable. Ideally, this notification should take place at the start of the semester, since the nature of some courses makes it difficult and sometimes impossible for the faculty to accommodate excessive absences.

With proper advanced notice prior to the class starting, the student will notify their professor and the Office of Accessibility that they will be utilizing this accommodation. The student will email the professor with Accessibility copied before class as well as complete the Absence Consideration Form that Accessibility will manage and keep track of what has been requested. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain the notes or material gone over in class and submit any due assignments. Note that professors have discretion over their attendance policy for the class and there is no guarantee that the professor will grant an excused absence. Under no circumstances will the Office of Accessibility make requests for consideration that are not made in a timely manner. Accommodations cannot be retroactively allocated. Absence cannot be considered if a student does not email professor and Accessibility nor fills out the required form.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are my responsibilities as a faculty member?

Providing accommodations is a shared responsibility between you, the student and the Office of Accessibility. It is the student's responsibility to make you aware of the need for an accommodation by providing you with a copy of the accommodation letter listing their approved accommodation(s). When you receive the accommodation letter you are responsible for keeping the information confidential and providing the accommodations listed when the student requests it. Faculty may not limit or discourage a student's use of their accommodations in any way including shortening the allotted time for an exam, not allowing the use of the Office of Accessibility testing room, or persuading a student to take their exam in class unless they are providing the extended time and distraction reduced location.

Why am I not given more information about a student's particular disability?

The nature of a student's disability, the content of the supporting documentation, and other records on file with the Office of Accessibility are confidential. Information will be released to others only as necessary to administer the University's accommodation of the student's disability. Students may wish to discuss their disability and learning styles with faculty and are free to disclose any information that they choose. However, students should not be compelled to disclose any information beyond what is written in the accommodation letter. Faculty members who feel they need more information about a student in order to provide effective accommodations should contact Office of Accessibility. Please be aware that all information (including accommodation letters) regarding a student's disability is to be kept confidential. Discussions or meetings with students regarding a disability and/or accommodations should occur in private.

Do I have to give accommodations if a student speaks to me the day-of or day-before an exam?

Yes, as long as they previously informed you of their disability by providing you with an accommodation letter. Institutions are not legally permitted to deny a student their accommodations based on deadlines that indicate they must request testing accommodations a certain number of days ahead of time. As a courtesy to you and the Office of Accessibility staff, students are expected to submit a testing request at least 5 days prior to an assessment, between the hours of 8:30am – 4:30pm.

Can I just cut out the middle man and make accommodations for the student without consulting the Office of Accessibility?

While faculty members may assist a student in their course as they deem necessary, only the Office of Accessibility can grant accommodations. If you choose to do a student a favor and make some sort of alternate arrangement for a test or extend a deadline, make it clear the arrangement is not in any way related to their disability. Students can easily become confused if you offer them what you refer to as an "accommodation" when they may not receive that in other classes. You should instead be very clear that you are doing them a favor and if they would like accommodations because of their disability they must go through the Office of Accessibility.

How should I grade the work of students with accommodations?

You should grade the work of students with accommodations for documented disabilities the same as you would grade the work of any other student.

What should I do if I suspect a student has a disability, but has not self-identified?

If you suspect a student may have a disability, please refer them to the Office of Accessibility. Ideally, we can help the student make arrangements for testing to determine if a disability exists, and if so, appropriate accommodations. You may not ask a student if they have a disability as that is against the requirements of the ADA.

What if I have not received a letter, but a student approaches me about receiving accommodations?

Though most students with disabilities identify themselves during the enrollment process, a student may choose to disclose a disability at any point during their tenure at Siena. If you are approached by a student or an advisee who discloses a disability, they should be referred to the Office of Accessibility.

What are temporary disabilities?

Students with temporary disabilities are afforded accommodations as needed on a short-term basis. Typical accommodations for a temporary disability as a result of, for example, a broken arm, would include more time on tests or a scribe. A student may be late or miss class and need assistance due to a temporary mobility impairment. While personal care needs are the responsibility of the student, the Office of Accessibility can provide some adaptive equipment and support in assisting students with temporary disabilities. Transportation for students with temporary mobility disabilities can be accessed through Siena's Transportation Office. Concussions also fall under the temporary disability category. These students may often need absence consideration or extra time on tests. Unlike other students registered with the Office of Accessibility, those with temporary disabilities have to re-register at the beginning of each semester should they want to continue with accommodations.

What are my responsibilities as a faculty member regarding students with disabilities?

- Provide information to all students about the Office of Accessibility on their course syllabus and/or make announcement during the first week of class.
- Meet the classroom access needs of registered students with disabilities in a timely manner.
- Provide an opportunity to take make-up exams on a timely basis for students who miss exams for a disability-related reason.
- Provide accessible technology in courses including captioned video (for students who are deaf or hard of hearing), web accessibility, and/or accessible course materials. The Office of Accessibility will work with the instructor where immediate access challenges cause barriers.
- Maintain confidentiality of information regarding disability issues by not calling attention to the student's disability during class.
- Refer students to the Office of Accessibility who have requested accommodations but have not yet registered with our office.
- Not limit students' use of their accommodations in any way.
- Evaluate students based on their abilities, not their disabilities.