# **CIVIL RIGHTS**

# **ACCESS**

# **INCLUSION BY DESIGN**

## **A guide to faculty responsibilities for students**

Male Virginia Tech student seated in a wheelchair. Female student seated in class, taking notes on paper.

### **CIVIL RIGHTS**

All faculty are representatives of Virginia Tech and are required to uphold students’ civil rights. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as Amended in 2008 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are civil rights legislation, not entitlement programs, as enforced by law.

The Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office is authorized to interpret the ADA as Amended in 2008, determine the presence of a disability, and to determine reasonable accommodations for students under University Policy Memorandum 178 and University Policy 4075.

The SSD office promotes efforts to provide equal access and a culture of inclusion without altering the essential elements of coursework for all Virginia Tech students. Civil rights remain the responsibility of the entire campus community.



For more information about disability civil rights, please see these websites:

Office for Civil Rights, Dept. of Education

www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr

US Dept. of Justice, Civil Rights Division

www.ada.gov

US Access Board

www.access-board.gov

### **ACCESS**

In addition to providing accommodations authorized by SSD, faculty should provide an accessible instructional environment.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

* Accessible seating in classrooms and labs
* Audio-description tagged graphics and photos
* Captioned videos and audio content, including YouTube videos and guest presentations
* Consideration of students with disabilities in emergency evacuation plans
* Screen-reader accessible third-party online learning systems, online courses, written content, and faculty sites

### **INCLUSION BY DESIGN**

Students with disabilities contribute to the cultural and intellectual diversity of our campus.

Inclusion of students with disabilities should be intentional and designed into instruction, and not implemented as an afterthought or a retroactive adjustment.

Under the law, students with disabilities must receive an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from academic programs by receiving the same information and experiences at the same time as their peers. Planning in advance will go a long way to help you towards meeting the needs of students and your responsibilities under the law.

### **COLLABORATE**

SSD collaborates with faculty to review their curricula and suggest proactive strategies for creating a more inclusive instructional environment.

SSD welcomes the opportunity to meet with students and faculty to resolve any relevant issues that may interfere with students’ full access to academics and/or hinder academic performance.

SSD is available to:

* Consult with departments and faculty
* Present in classrooms and university events
* Work with students to obtain and use accommodations and promote success

For more information, please see the SSD website:

[www.ssd.vt.edu](http://www.ssd.vt.edu)



Photo of Lavery Hall where the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office is located. 

### **CONTACT**

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Virginia Tech has a strong commitment to the principles of diversity, inclusion, and to maintaining a work and learning environment that is free of all forms of discrimination. As a result, this institution does not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Anyone having questions concerning discrimination should contact the Office of Equity & Access.