

## Limited Mobility

### *Definition*

Mobility impairment may be caused by a number of factors, such as disease, an accident, or a congenital disorder and may be the result from neuro-muscular and orthopedic impairments. It may include conditions such as spinal cord injury, paralysis, muscular dystrophy and cerebral palsy. It may be combined with other problems as well (i.e. brain injury, learning disability, hearing or visual impairment).

### *Documentation*

Documentation needs to be completed by a Certified Physician who has expertise and experience in the diagnosis of the condition for which academic accommodations are being requested. Documentation needs to be current, within the last five years, and must include the following:

- 1) An identification of the disabling condition(s)
- 2) The barriers for which accommodations are being requested.
- 3) Degree and range of functioning for chronic or progressive condition.
- 4) Prescribed medications, dosages and schedules, which may influence the types of accommodations provided, including any possible side effects.
- 5) Recommendations as to how the disabling condition(s) may be accommodated.

With this documentation students may be eligible to access appropriate support services and possible adaptive technology to reduce barriers to learning.

### *Symptoms*

Mobility impairment covers a wide range of impairment, from students who can move quite freely with minimal assistance, to ones who rely on a motorized wheelchair. In some conditions the person may experience pain, spasticity (continuous muscle contraction), or lack of coordination. In other conditions there are intermittent flare-ups (when a student might be absent from class) and periods of remission, where the student seems to have no impairment of function (i.e. multiple sclerosis). Some students who use wheelchairs are able to stand, but not walk. Some may walk with the use of an aid (canes, braces, walker). The use of an aid may increase fatigue.

### *Student Strategies and Accommodations*

- Meet with Disability Service Advisor several months before starting your course. They can help you plan, provide support and possibly assist in accessing adaptive technology. It is your responsibility to provide appropriate documentation. If you will require special assistance such as recorded materials, mobility assistance, one-to-one attendant care, special equipment, or special classroom seating options, it is especially important to contact Disability Services **at least 4 months prior** to the start of the semester.
- Consider taking a reduced course load.
- Request a class outline as soon as possible to assess any problem areas.
- If an assignment or presentation is to be given in a format that is difficult (i.e. written), request from the Instructor to use an alternative format for presentation (i.e. oral) well ahead of time.
- Appropriate accommodation may include any of the following:
  - Tape record lectures and/or use a note taker
  - Time extensions for projects and assignments.
  - Exams in an alternate format, extra time and/or a quiet room to write exams.

\*These are suggestions only -- you are the best judge of what will work for you.

### ***Instructor Strategies and Accommodations***

- It can be a great help to the student if prior thought is given to the location of both the student and the materials to be used (especially in a lab setting). For example, make sure the student is located where the blackboard and demonstrations can be clearly seen and is not blocking the emergency exit.
- Pop quizzes are not recommended, especially if writing assistance is needed.
- Make the classroom accessible.
- If combined with another disability, refer to the specific disability for further strategies and accommodations and/or consult with the Disability Service Advisor.
- Appropriate accommodations may include any of the following:
  - Tape/recording lectures and photocopying lecture notes.
  - Time extensions for assignments, especially if writing skills are limited or assistance is needed.
  - If an assignment or presentation is to be given in a format that is difficult for the student (i.e. written), encourage the use of an alternative format (i.e. tape record assignments, use of a scribe).
  - If assignment is oral, and speech is a problem, accommodations may include a reader, or written or visual presentation.
  - Exams in an alternate format, extra time and/or a quiet room to write exams.

### **In An Emergency**

- Plan ahead for building evacuation and ask if assistance is needed.
- If not familiar with pushing a wheelchair, be careful in doorways – check for clearance.
- Ask to make sure wheelchair may be lifted.
- Be sure motorized wheelchair is turned off.