

The University of the Incarnate Word is committed to providing a supportive, challenging, diverse, and integrated environment for all students.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—Subpart E and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the University ensures accessibility to its programs, services, and activities for students with documented disabilities.

To qualify for services, the student must provide the Office of Student Disability Services appropriate documentation of his or her disability at the time services and/or accommodations are requested.

This brochure is available
in alternate format
upon request

*Information provided by the University of Southern California

The University of the Incarnate Word
Student Disability Services

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Student Disability Services

**The University of
the Incarnate Word**



**Mobility
Impairments**

**Administration Building
Room 105**

Telephone: 210-829-3997

Mobility Impairments

Mobility impairments are caused by conditions present at birth or are the result of illness or physical injury. Functional abilities vary widely depending on age of onset, nature of the disease or injury, and response to treatment. Mobility impairments may fluctuate with periods of remission and exacerbation. The best source of information regarding functions and limitations is the student.

Physical access to a class is the first barrier a student with a mobility impairment may face, but this is not only related to the specific accessibility of the building or classroom. Crowded walkways, distance, change in elevation, lack of reliable transportation, or mechanical problems with a wheelchair can easily cause a student to be late.

Accommodations for students with mobility impairments may include: accessible classroom location, furniture, alternate ways of completing assignments, lab or library assistance, adaptive computer technology, exam modifications, and conveniently located parking.

A student with a physical disability may or may not want assistance in a particular situation. Ask before giving assistance and wait for a response. Listen to any instructions the student may give. By virtue of experience, the student likely knows the safest and most efficient way to accomplish the task at hand.

Be considerate of the extra time it might take a students with a disability to speak or act. Allow the student to set the pace walking or talking. A wheelchair should be viewed as a personal assistance device rather than something to which one is confined.

The wheelchair is also part of the student's personal space; so not lean on or touch the chair, and do not push the chair, unless asked. Persons with mobility limitations may prefer to sit near the classroom entrance to avoid additional walking or the difficulty of moving through crowded aisles with crutches, canes, or walkers.

Students who use wheelchair/carts will need adequate floor space to they can park without blocking the flow of traffic. Some students walk short distances and may prefer to get out of their wheelchair/carts and use regular desks or tables that comfortably accommodate them. Using a wheelchair only part of the time does not mean that a person is faking a disability. It is usually a means to conserve energy or move about more quickly. Students who normally use a mobility aid other than a wheelchair may use a wheelchair occasionally because of weather conditions or flare-ups.

Classes taught in laboratory settings usually require some modification of the workstation for wheelchair users. The amount of under-counter space, working reach, and aisle widths are the primary concerns. Working directly with the student is the best way to alter the workstation.

Some wheelchair users may be able to use regular workstations if they can transfer from the wheelchair to another seat at the workstation. A special workstation may be set up at an accessible table. If the class involves field trips, care should be taken in selecting the site to ensure that the facility is accessible enough for the mobility-impaired student to participate and benefit from the experience.

Instructional Strategies

- If possible, try not to seat wheelchair users in the back row. Move a desk or rearrange seating at a table so the student is part of regular classroom seating
- Make arrangements early for field trips and ensure that accommodations will be in place on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility)
- Make sure accommodations are in place for in-class written work (e.g., allowing the student to use a scribe or assistive-computer technology or allowing the student to complete the assignment outside of class)
- Be flexible with deadlines; assignments that require library work or access to sites off campus will consume more time for a student with mobility impairments
- When in doubt about how to assist the student, ask him or her
- Allow the student the same anonymity as other students (e.g., avoid pointing out the student or the alternative arrangements to the rest of the class)