

## 4.3 Session Q&A

### Resources shared during session:

[National Deaf Center for PostSecondary Outcomes](#)

[National Center for College Students with Disabilities](#)

[ClearMask](#)

[Rapid Response PPE Humanity Shield](#)

[CDC List of Individuals at Increased Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19](#)

[EEOC Covid-19 Guidance](#)

### Clear Masks:

- **Academic Services asked “Do those clear masks eliminate the fog on glasses?”**
  - Allen Sheffield:
    - Fogging can be addressed with anti-fogging wipes and Sprays. There are also home solutions like shaving cream that can be used.
  - Jen Dugger:
    - According to ClearMask, their products have “anti-fogging properties” and I haven’t seen one fog up yet!
- **Erika Wise asked “For masks made of plastic and cloth, is there an option to remove the cloth to wash?”**
  - Allen Sheffield:
    - Clear Mask is intended to be one time use and disposable.
    - Rapid Response PPE has [care instructions in the FAQ](#).

### Requests for Mask Exceptions:

- **Lynn Shattuck: There are going to be students who do not have a disability, but due to COVID-19 are not comfortable coming to campus or wearing a mask and want**

**accommodations. How should DSS offices address helping students who would not normally be "registered" with our office?**

- Jen Dugger:
  - I would definitely encourage you to get your campus to adopt a universal approach to this issue. You're right - there are going to be people without disabilities who will want an exception to the mask requirement or people without disabilities who will need to miss class due to COVID (they get sick, they are exposed, they have caregiving responsibilities, etc) when taking on-campus offerings and the institution needs a proactive, holistic approach to these situations since it would not be appropriate for them to come through the DR/DS Office. Also see my note below.
- **Sara Johnson asks "What are offices doing when a student with a disability (PTSD) refuses to wear a mask when your campus requires them?"**
  - Jen Dugger:
    - This has changed a lot on our campus over the last 6 weeks and we're still working through this question but my hope now is that we will land somewhere very close to the following: Everyone will be required to wear an appropriate face mask while inside any on-campus building. If a person cannot do so due to disability or any other reason, a remote alternative should be made available. In the rare instance that a remote alternative is not available because it would fundamentally alter the learning outcomes or otherwise essential aspects of the on-campus experience, the individual should seek out an accommodation through \_\_\_\_\_. The accommodation may be another type of face covering (like a face shield) but safety requirements will need to be met so that this person and all who encounter them remain safe to the extent possible.
- **Sam Dieguez: Any suggestions for a student that has a disability that supports not to wear a mask but then also has migraines or headaches which would not allow the alternative masks that have been suggested**
  - Allen Sheffield:
    - First, talk with your environmental safety, public health, compliance, etc. to determine what exactly the university policy is and what options exist.
      - Is mask wearing required?
      - What specific types of masks/face coverings/shields are required? Is there flexibility?
      - Are there situations where a mask can be forgone? (examples, if in office alone, no one within 10 feet, etc.)
      - What is the university doing to enforce the mask policy?

- Engage in an interactive process with the student.
  - Why exactly are they requesting the need to wear a mask? What is the barrier they are identifying?
  - If the issue is an accessible mask is needed, can the university purchase appropriate masks to address the need?
  - Does the documentation support the nature of their request?
  - Can barriers be addressed with alternatives to mask?
  - What other options exist? Looking for remote options for students. Reworking schedule to find classes that are being offered remotely, etc.
- Attendee Response:
  - Tina Vires: If unable to wear mask - providing accommodation of remote attendance"

## ADA vs Public Health

- **Amy Curran: Could anyone clarify for me - did Allen just share that ADA does not supersede what Public health says. Meaning: Public Health may trump ADA (in terms of mask wearing)?**
  - Allen Sheffield:
    - If a policy is in place (i.e. Masks) for the health and safety of everyone, the university is not required to allow an exception as an accommodation because this would be putting others at risk. [ADATA Guidance on Health and Safety](#)
    - This does not mean we do not have to engage with the student, we need to determine if the request is appropriate based on the documentation, is there a health risk (talk to the appropriate people at your institution. For example, your environmental health, compliance officers, legal counsel, etc.
      - We need to review to ensure that the policy itself is not implemented in a way that is discriminatory or that an accommodation is readily available. For example, if your university has designated paths for flow of foot traffic in a building but the "in" door is not accessible, you cannot tell someone who needs the accessible door that they cannot enter.
      - If the accommodation requested cannot be safely allowed, then the university has grounds to deny the request.
      - This should ALWAYS be an interactive process and should include the necessary individuals. Unilaterally denying all requests would likely be a compliance issue.
  - Attendee responses:
    - William Goren: The ADA's DOJ regulations allow for a direct threat to others defense. As it stands now, a person who does not wear a mask is by the science

a direct threat to others. With respect to employment, the ADA's EEOC regulations allow for a direct threat to self or to others. If a direct threat exists, you still have to do everything short of that to accommodate the person with a disability.

## Requests for In-Person

- **Lorre Wolf:** We are having the opposite inquiry—many students who want only to be in-person rather than remote. Any suggestions where fairness and public health intersect?
- **Shelli Mahler:** I've had some requests about this that were related to visual concerns or migraines. Significant screen time affects their ability to function.
  - Adam Crawford:
    - I would encourage students to first work with their advisors to see if they can get into in-person classes from the jump. If not possible, engage in the interactive process to determine eligibility for accommodations to address their concerns.
    - As we established earlier, an accommodation can not pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others. Adding another person to a physically distanced classroom at capacity is a direct threat.
    - Could the student have other accommodations, like deadline extensions, for their hybrid or online classes? Is it possible to address the issue by working with the academic department on course substitutions, independent study, or course sequence adjustments?
  - Attendee responses:
    - Tina Vires: Shelli, would greater usage of screen readers/audio options help?
    - Shelli Mahler: Tina good idea. Many of these students have some vision so they choose not to use screen readers much, but maybe we could help them get more comfortable with that. Perhaps they could also get hard copies of the class presentations and then just follow along with the audio. Thanks for your suggestion. Gets me thinking!

## Supporting Students with COVID-19?

- **Elizabeth Brown asks “In the previous Legal Year in Review session, it seemed like Paul Grossman was advocating that every student who contracts COVID-19 should be considered disabled, based on legal precedent. Can anyone confirm or clarify?”**
  - Allen Sheffield:

- Simply put, we just don't know enough to be able to answer definitively. No federal guidelines have been announced yet. There is much about Covid-19 that we do not know. We are in a "wait-and-see" pattern.
  - Paul appeared to be stating that "until we know more" Covid-19 should be treated as a Disability. This does not mean that all people with Covid-19 have a right to accommodation but that all students should be considered covered under the law.
  - Remember, Paul is not your legal counsel and there are varying perspectives on this issue.. You should talk with your ADA compliance officer or legal counsel to see what the stance of your university is.
- Jen Dugger:
  - I attended the session early in the conference with Wendy Harbour and Richard Allegra from NCCSD. They seemed to be separating those who have a COVID diagnosis and no symptoms from those who have a COVID diagnosis with symptoms from a third group - those who no longer have COVID but who continue to have post-COVID symptoms. I appreciated this breakdown. You may choose to take a different approach with all three groups in terms of registration with your office.
- Attendee Responses:
  - William Goren: That's really complicated to answer.
  - Chuck Eade: yes, Elizabeth, that is what Paul stated this morning
  - Academic Services:I agree, Elizabeth, that is what I heard as well. "Until we know more . . . "
  - Rusty Rogers: Though he did state that did not mean COVID = Accommodations, just that COVID = they are a protected class.
- **Oana Zayic: If you have a policy for flexible attendance and extension to deadlines, have you changed that policy to reflect instances where a student has tested positive with Covid 19? What does that look like?**
  - Jen Dugger:
    - Copying and pasting my answer from the "Mask Exception" section here. I would definitely encourage you to get your campus to adopt a universal approach to this issue. There are going to be people with and without COVID who will want an exception to the attendance or deadline requirements associated with their on-campus courses. They could get sick, they could get exposed/contact traced, they could end up with unforeseen caregiving responsibilities, etc. The institution needs a proactive, holistic approach to these situations. Without that, there will be students in the classroom who don't want to go through the hassle of registering with the DR/DS office, who are contagious, and who feel they don't have good alternatives accessible to them besides going to class.
- **In our pre-session survey, there were many questions and concerns about what we do if we all end up going back to the remote environment again.**

- Jen Dugger:
  - I mentioned this in the session but I am attaching the “Pandemic Planning” document I put together after going remote the first time. This document includes all of the steps we took at that time so that we don’t have to re-invent the wheel. Feel free to use it!

## Remote Learning

- **Sonia Doyle: The assessment questions would be really helpful to have Jen.**
  - Jen Dugger: During the session, I mentioned that we had done some faculty and student assessment at Portland State at the end of the spring term to learn more about the experience folks were having in the classroom. I am sharing three documents with you that I hope you will find helpful - 1) the questions for the student survey, 2) the questions for the faculty survey, and 3) the separate form we sent students to after they’d completed the survey so they could sign up to be entered into a drawing to win a gift card for their participation.

## Miscellaneous

### Online Course Fees in the Age of COVID

- **Justin Lozano: On our campus, online classes cost more than seated classes. Due to a potential approval that they should be working remotely and to get them into all online classes already created, would there be an expectation that they only have to pay the seated class price, rather than the online prices? I'm relating this to when we approve a private room accommodation in residence life, and students not being charged those private room prices due to disability.**
  - Jen Dugger:
    - A bunch of us chimed in during the session but just wanted to reiterate that if you are approving something as the most reasonable accommodation and it costs more, that cost should be absorbed by the university. You’re right - it’s just like with a single room accommodation cost.
  - Adam Crawford:
    - The opposite is true for us at Ohio State (in-person is more expensive than online, especially for non-residents). We worked out a back-door process with our Registrar to charge remote participation students as distance learners, even though their classes may be coded as in-person. Agree with Jen, the extra cost either way should be removed or absorbed by the University so as not to “charge extra for an accommodation”.

# Captioning

- **William Goren: Has anyone tried zoom captioning that just came online? I tried the Google meets the other day and it was quite good even if it was not perfect. As good as Google meets?**
  - Allen Sheffield:
    - When it comes to discussing captions or accessibility for Deaf and HoH students, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the presentation hosted by NDC on Tuesday July 21 (8.2) as the recording might be helpful.
    - While I have not tried auto-captions through Zoom, I want to offer a warning related to AI-generated captions.

AI Captioning is still a work in progress and, in my judgment and that of my university, not appropriate to be utilized as the primary accommodation for communication access without cleaning before being shared with the student. This means it is not used for live events or classes.

While it is improving, there are a lot of issues with AI captioning with respect to accuracy. Particularly with voices that do not fit a "stereotypical white male American English language speaker". For example, with my Midwestern white male accent, I can get Google Meet to be close to 100% when I am intentional about speaking and using common, predictable language while my partner, who is from Singapore and speaks more of a UK based English dialect, gets very much less favorable results when repeating the same vernacular. Anecdotally, accuracy for her can be closer to 50%-75%. During the CUNY Accessibility conference, a presenter shared their study that showed the impact of native language, length of time in country, and gender on accuracy of auto-captions for presentations in English. There was a drastic difference in the accuracy when testing AI captions with those variables. It is important to note that the captions for the CUNY conference session were AI-generated and they struggled with the presenter's accent and provided a live demonstration of the existing issues. I followed up with CUNY for the presenter information but they have not responded.

Engaging in a back-and-forth conversation rather than a single speaker, additional background noise (shuffling papers, animals, fans, etc.), discussing random, obtuse, or complex topics, or using slang can also have an impact.

AI-generated captions **are** helpful in creating a timestamped transcript, which does cut a LOT of time in the creation of captions. This can be the most time consuming aspect, but editing for accuracy still requires a time commitment and is necessary to ensure useability of the captions.

I am not aware if GoogleMeet captions can be exported as a transcript so you may need to look into this.

## Technology and Equipment

- **Sonia Doyle: Does anyone know if the virtual waiting room is available through WebEx?**
  - Jen Dugger: The Virtual Front Desk that the DRC at Portland State created is through Zoom. We just used the Zoom settings that are available for all meetings to create the environment we wanted. I would assume you would be able to do that in any similar platform. I am sharing a document we used for creating the virtual front desk and I hope that will be helpful in envisioning what this might look like at your institution.
- **Angela Barbour: Our office does not provide items for personal use. How does providing computers and printers work with that given the current environment?**
  - Jen Dugger: I believe that the panelist discussing this mentioned that their institution was doing this, not their office. That's the same as at my institution, Portland State. The Office of Information Technology purchased a large bank of laptops, Chromebooks, and WIFI hotspots and then mailed them out to students who needed them.
  - Allen Sheffield: My university did similar to what Jen's university did. We also worked with students to provide other technology that was requested, which could also be for reason of disability. For example, a student who needed to print out her readings was provided a printer. I gave another student who lived on campus one of our printer to use because the labs were shut down and not easy for her to use. We are also loaning a student one of our white boards. We will loan out our noise cancelling headphones, laptops, and other technology. As long as we have something that could benefit a student, we will err on the side of ensuring that it adding benefit rather than sitting in our office.
  - Attendee Responses:
    - Adam: Our campus is putting cameras and all necessary technology into the classrooms. Faculty who teach on campus will have the option or will be required to run each on-campus class as a Zoom simulcast so any student can choose to stay home on a given day and attend the class remotely. Curious how many other campuses are taking this approach. And I agree that some classes are such that physical attendance is critical. We will see how this all plays out

## Online/Remote Labs

- **Rosemary Kreston: What are universities and colleges doing about lab courses? How are labs being converted to online?**
- **Elisabeth Burd: I would second Rosemary's recommendation of collecting information about labs and other problematic courses."**



- **Richard Allegra (session moderator and AHEAD/NCCSD Staff): “Hi Rosemary. We can collect things into the AHEAD Community on COVID-19 after this.”**
  - Jen Dugger:
    - In addition to checking out those resources Richard is sharing, I also want to just caution that this should definitely be something that the institution has been thinking about in a more holistic manner - a format that could work for all students with and without disabilities who cannot attend on-campus due to COVID. There are so many ways to do this but I would start by contacting those at your institution who oversee the various science, engineering, computer science, and other courses that have labs associated with them to see what they are thinking.

## Documentation

- **William Goren: A question: Is there a wide range of what colleges will require by way of documentation to get disability services? for example, full battery v. IEP v. 504 plan.**
  - Allen Sheffield:
    - At my university, we are taking into consideration current events. In practice, this has resulted in more provisional approvals with longer time frames. We have a committee review so we are being consistent across the Rutgers campuses. We are focused on answering 1) is there a condition and 2) what is the current functional impact. This information can be gathered from different sources.
  - Jen Dugger:
    - For those who are unfamiliar, AHEAD has documentation guidelines on the website under the “Resources” tab that should be foundational to any office’s practices. However, even within that framework there’s a wide range of interpretations as to what documentation is needed. We are using the pandemic and taking this opportunity to re-examine our practices, rewrite documentation guidelines to be less restrictive, and explain to our administration that documentation in the traditional sense, is oftentimes overly burdensome and creates unnecessary barriers for students.

## COVID-19 Accommodations Request Form/Process

- **There were multiple questions on can we share sample COVID-19 accommodation/academic adjustment request forms, who handles non-disability related requests, should there be the same process for faculty/staff vs. students?**
  - Darshan Shah:

- At my university, we have created a form on Maxient (case management software for student conduct/BIT team/Care team). I know many other case management softwares will have the ability to create forms. We are focusing on disability-related requests (which will be handled through our DSS office) and all other requests (which could be: familial, personal, preferential, financial etc.) All requests in our 'other' category will be handled through our Care team). Here is a link for our request form (this is a draft version, we are still fine tuning some details and accessibility of this form)  
[https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?FairleighDickinsonUniv&layout\\_id=25](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?FairleighDickinsonUniv&layout_id=25). Feel free to use the content of this form, as needed.
- All requests for employees are handled through our Human Resources (HR) office (accommodation requests for employment). This includes, faculty, staff, graduate assistants and resident assistants etc. Our HR office has a similar request form (disability-related request and all other), with a couple of additional questions pertaining to essential job functions.
- Adam Crawford (Ohio State):
  - Who handles non-disability-related COVID requests (e.g. age, obesity, pregnancy, living with or caring for someone who is high-risk): While all students will use the same universal COVID accommodation request form and be triaged by the DS office, we will refer non-disability requests to another office (currently planning on the ADA Coordinator's Office)
  - DS will triage all student-based requests (academics, housing). HR will triage all employment-based requests, including student employment and GAs/TAs.
  - If a student is requesting remote participation, phase 1 before applying is to work with their advisor to try to get enrolled into all-online classes from the jump. If the student is unable to do so, then phase 2 we can determine eligibility for remote participation as an accommodation and engage their faculty in determining feasibility for in-person or hybrid classes. We may also need to work with departments to determine course substitutions, independent studies, or course sequence adjustments.
  - We have worked with our Registrar to establish a back-door method to charge remote-participation students as distance learners, even if their courses are coded as being in-person. This will significantly reduce costs for the student and eliminate "charging more for an accommodation" concerns.
  - Unfortunately I am not able to share form content at this time but we are hoping for final approval from leadership soon at which point it will be published and available to share. Essentially we are collecting information from the student on (1) the modality of their classes, (2) their planned living arrangement for fall, (3) the reason for their request, (4) and the request itself.

## Exam Proctoring

- **Wanda Kellyman: Can you address testing for campuses that are offering hybrid classes?**
  - Adam Crawford:

- Important to remember: Students are not approved for “taking a test in a testing center”. The accommodation is extended time or a distraction-reduced testing space. That can be accomplished in multiple ways.
- Due to our architecture and capacity following physical distancing guidelines, we are only going to offer in-office proctoring for students with the following requested accommodations: private room, test assistant, assistive technology, alternative format. This is because these accommodations may require on-site proctoring.
- For test assistants, we will likely still have the student schedule with us in AIM but they won’t physically come into our office. Instead, the student will take the test at home and the test assistant will connect with them via Zoom and screenshare.
- Students not requesting any of the above accommodations, which is the majority of students with just extended time or distraction-reduced space, will be expected to test virtually. We will be sending out university-wide communication that instructors are expected to offer the assessment on our LMS (similar to how they tested students in late spring and over the summer).
- Students with concerns can request an exception from their Access Specialist. One option is to explore alternative accommodations like taking tests at a different time of day if that would address the barrier.
- We are considering offering disposable ear plugs for pickup at our office for students concerned about auditory distractions when testing from home.
- Attendee Responses:
  - Attendee Responses:
    - Carsen Kipley (he/him): @ Wanda Kellyman: for exams in hybrid classes, we'd have a conversation with the instructor first. UArizona is trying to push instructors for alternative assessments. when that's not possible, we'll be addressing each class on a case by case basis and try and answer some questions before opening our testing center to the class: are all students taking exams online or do all students have the option for in person? Can the professor provide extended time and other accommodations like minimal distraction? With our limited seating, we'll be putting a focus on exams and students who use assistive tech as an accommodation. we'll also hold blocks of time when we can start exams which will allow for cleaning between exam blocks. If class does not meet during that block of time, we'll seat the students with the closest available block of time.