

## PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

### Characteristics and General Information

Students with physical disabilities may have multiple disabilities that require a variety of accommodations, or they may need only an accessible classroom location. Ask students to describe their needs for you. Many students who appear quite disabled may have complete use of arms and hands and be able to take notes and write exams, while others who do not appear disabled may have nerve damage, which prevents them from taking notes or writing exams.

When there is a student with an apparent disability in your class, you may approach her/him *after* the first class and ask if there are any accommodations required. Although this is not your obligation, it is a courteous way to open communication and may help the student to express needs early. Also, it is not insulting to the person involved. Many students mention that they appreciate a professor who approaches them. This should always be done privately and never in front of the class.

### Types of Physical Disabilities

- **Wheelchair Users**- cerebral palsy (CP), multiple sclerosis (MS), muscular dystrophy (MD), spinal cord injuries, spina bifida
- **Mobility Impairments**- amputees, arthritis, lupus, diabetes, medical illnesses, cystic fibrosis (CF), multiple sclerosis

### Possible Accommodations

- Relocation of a classroom or activity to assure physical access. NOTE: If a class takes field trips or other OFF –CAMPUS activities, those must also be accessible. If you need to relocate the class, please check to see that they new location is accessible.
- Alternatives to in-class writing assignments for a student who cannot write
- A note-taker; a scribe or adaptive computer equipment for exams
- Schedule more frequent, shorter breaks, or allow student to get up and move around during lengthy class sessions
- Ways to include a student who cannot speak in group discussions or other group formats; student may have a communication device or an aide
- Extra time for written exams and in some cases the use of a word processor. The CTLE Is available in these cases and faculty should contact CTLE staff to make necessary arrangements in a timely fashion.