

Policy and Procedures for Alternative Media

1. Definitions and Terms

- 1.1. Registered ODS students with verified print disabilities may be eligible for Alternative Media Services (AMS).
- 1.2. *"Alternate Media" is defined as instructional materials, textbooks, University publications, and other printed materials in formats accessible and usable by individuals with print disabilities.*
- 1.3. *"Print Disability" is a term used to describe a person restricted in the ability to use or comprehend standard print materials because of a sensory, physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability. Students with print disabilities include students who are blind or have low vision, have dyslexia or similar learning disability or ADHD/ADD that significantly affects their ability to gain meaning from printed text, or have a psychiatric, systemic or health condition that limits their ability to read printed text.*
- 1.4. *"Accessible Formats" may include audio (e.g., books on tape or MP3), digital (i.e., electronic text, a.k.a. "etext"), large print, and Braille and tactile graphics.*
- 1.5. *"Readers" refer to work study students who record printed material onto cassette tapes.*

2. Eligibility and Initiation of AMS

- 2.1. Eligibility for this service is determined by the disability coordinator of the campus and reviewed by system wide director of ODS,, and is based in part on the professional documentation provided by the student.
- 2.2. Students found eligible are also authorized for **priority registration**. Eligible students must advise the campus disability coordinator of their AMS needs each academic term by registering early and providing either a copy of their Student Data Sheet, and/or a list of courses, including professors' names and required texts (if possible), at the earliest possible time.
- 2.3. Students using AMS must be enrolled in the course for which they are requesting alternative format. Alternate media is provided for required Alliant International University curriculum texts, course readers, syllabi and handouts, only. Alternative media will not be provided for personal use or recommended texts.
- 2.4. Students must purchase the print material of any text they request in an alternate format, regardless of whether the alternate format is readily available or must be converted in-house. Students must provide ODS with a copy of their purchase receipts each quarter.

3. Alternate Media Formats, and Procuring Alternate Media

3.1. Requests for materials in alternative format will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Once a request is approved, student input and the availability of resources will be used in determining the specific media format for each academic course.

3.2. Materials may be available in an alternative format other than students' initial request. Preferred alternative format may be available at a later date. The most common formats are audio cassettes (books on tape), digital audio (audio on CD-ROM), ebooks (enhanced electronic text with navigational features), and etext (electronic text in a Word or plain text format that the computer reads aloud.)

3.3. **Accessing/reading etext:**

3.3.1. Additional screenreader resources that students may download or purchase include:

- www.readplease.com FREE screenreader (basic functionality). The ReadPlease Plus version has additional features, and costs approximately \$50-60. Additional, higher quality speech voices can be purchased for approximately \$25-60.
- www.textaloud.com Screenreader costs approximately \$30, and can also save files in audio format (e.g., MP3) to play on iPod, MP3 player, Palm or Pocket PC, etc. High quality speech voices.
- Additionally, students may want to invest in personal computer software to aid in reading. Such software may include JAWS, WYNN or Kurzweil.

3.4. Alternate media may be readily available from sources outside of ODS, readily available from ODS, or may need to be converted in-house by ODS.

3.4.1. **External Sources of AMS**

3.4.1.1. **Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic** www.rfb.org

- RFB&D is a nation-wide lending library providing print material in alternate formats for anyone with a documented print disability. They have been in existence for almost 60 years, staffed primarily by volunteers. In fiscal year 2004, RFB&D distributed 241,281 recorded textbooks to 137,025 members around the world. They produce high-quality audio text and digital books, and are the primary resource for most required texts, particularly traditional textbooks and classics. There is a member fee to join, and you must have special playback equipment to access the material.
- Students are strongly encouraged to become a member of RFB&D, but it is not required. However, due to limited resources and increased need, if a book is available on RFB&D but a student has chosen not to join, converting that book in-house will have a lower priority than converting a book that cannot be obtained at all.

3.4.1.2. **Bookshare.org** www.bookshare.org

- Bookshare.org is a new “virtual community” of members and supporters who contribute to an online repository of scanned text. Its holdings are limited right now, but growing, and the goal is to have a “a vast library of low cost scanned books instead of a small library of high quality digital books.” There is a member fee to join, but they provide basic screenreading software.

3.4.1.3. **National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS)** www.loc.gov/nls/index.html

- Through a national network of cooperating libraries, NLS administers a free library program of Braille and audio materials circulated to eligible borrowers in the United States by postage-free mail. They mainly have non-academic texts, newspapers and magazines.

3.4.1.4. **California Braille and Talking Book Library (BTL)** www.library.ca.gov/html/pubser05.cfm

- The California State Library loans Braille, cassette and talking books, magazines and playback equipment to northern Californians unable to read conventional print. Free.

3.4.1.5. **Publishers**

- When a text is not readily available, ODS makes a formal request for an electronic version from the publisher. Some publishers are able to provide ODS with the etext relatively quickly, others may take up to four (4) months. In-house conversion to etext will be commenced contemporaneously with the request to publishers, given the uncertainty of receiving the alternate media in a timely manner.

4. **ODS Conversion of AMS**

4.1. Material that is not readily available may be converted to etext in-house. Projected turn-around times for alternate format requests are determined on a case-by-case basis, and are subject to the availability of resources. Upon review of material to be formatted and converted, the Director will notify the student of the estimated completion date.

4.2. Given the increased requests/need for AMS, limited resources and time-consuming process of in-house production, the order in which texts will be converted will be prioritized in the following way:

4.2.1. Students who are blind or have low vision (legally blind)

4.2.2. Students who have visual impairments other than acuity (e.g., health or systemic visual impairments)

4.2.3. Materials that are received early

4.2.4. Reading assignment due dates

4.3. Students requesting materials in alternate formats must own a physical copy of the textbook or other course material, or obtain said materials before in-house AMS

production will begin. Students must provide ODS with their copy of the material to be converted, which may be disassembled and returned to the student in its altered condition.

- 4.4. ODS will not be held responsible for any damage to the materials that occur as a result of conversion to alternate format.
- 4.5. Readers are reserved for audio taping complex or complicated charts and graphs for students who are blind, and text material in poor condition that does not scan well. Most material to be produced in-house will be scanned and converted into etext.

5. **Copyright Laws and Policy**

- 5.1. Students will be provided with one alternate format copy for each material required for academic use. This alternate format, whether etext or audio tape, is copyrighted and may not be reproduced or distributed in a format other than a specialized format exclusively for use by persons with print disabilities.
- 5.2. The student may not copy, reproduce or distribute any AMS material, nor allow anyone else to do so. The student must sign an AMS Copyright Acknowledgement and Agreement form for each academic term that s/he requests AMS.
- 5.3. ODS reserves the right to discontinue service if any of the above terms, or a combination of the above terms, are violated or abused.