

Usage of Word Banks

Some students have documentation of a medical condition or learning disability that results in a significant memory deficit. These students generally have great difficulty retrieving information from memory even though they have carefully studied and understood the material. A Word Bank is intended to provide students with such memory deficits with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of course material during an exam. A Word Bank will not be suggested for a student unless Student Disability Services has disability-related documentation that strongly supports the need. If an instructor has concerns about the appropriateness of a Word Bank, the Student Disability Services office staff can address those concerns as needed.

Guidelines for creating a Word Bank

A Word Bank can be an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper on which students or instructors write words to help trigger the answer to an exam question. A Word Bank should not contain a synopsis of course material, but rather, it should include specific words. A Word Bank should include more words than what is needed on the examination. These cues or triggers enable the student to prompt recall of information previously learned, thus allowing them to answer the question. Without an actual understanding of the material through previous study, a word bank will not be much use to the student.

Instructors involved in this accommodation should feel comfortable stipulating guidelines and deadlines regarding creating the Word Bank. Either the instructor or the student may create the Word Bank. If created by the student, instructors must approve it before the test. If the student creates the bank, it is our suggestion that the student give it to the instructor about one week in advance of the test date. Once any necessary changes are made, and the Word Bank is approved, it should be sent to SDS, along with the test materials, by the instructor.