

# UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE FUTURE PROGRAM

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How can I get more information about FUTURE?**

Please visit <http://utfuture.org>

### **Are there some simple things that I can do to help the FUTURE student get the most out of my class?**

As you know, student success and engagement are positively correlated with the clear and organized presentation of course material. Make sure that your syllabus is easy to understand, learning objectives are clearly stated for each class, and remember to summarize main points. Students with ID typically have a harder time grasping abstract concepts and making generalizations so designing instruction to be more explicit is beneficial. Due to delayed aural processing, FUTURE students will benefit most from information that is presented both in visual and oral formats combined and will often struggle with note taking.

### **Will someone accompany the FUTURE student to my class and remain with the student during class?**

Students are assigned a mentor to assist with academic support; typically this will be a fellow undergraduate student. Please do not communicate with the FUTURE student through the mentor; interact with the FUTURE student directly. The mentor may take notes for the student, help them with academic support outside of class, and/or support the student's participation in class activities such as group work or discussions. The amount of support needed tends to vary widely based on the student and the course. Some FUTURE students may need a mentor with them at all times to get the most out of their academic courses, while another may benefit more from having almost no assistance. While we hope that our students gain subject matter knowledge through their university classes, and most do, other desired outcomes result from their interaction with other students and the experience of successfully challenging themselves.

### **Will the FUTURE student participate fully in the class?**

It is our expectation that the student participate to the best of their ability. The learning contract is a formal agreement with the student, you and the FUTURE Program which addresses their level of participation and adherence to expectations laid out in the course syllabus.

### **Who will provide accommodations and supports to help the FUTURE student.**

In general, the FUTURE program provides accommodations, however your feedback is important and we welcome any assistance you would like to provide. We have found it very beneficial when the instructor ensures that the FUTURE student is engaged and models inclusive practices for other students.

## What if I want to make some modifications to my instruction to help ensure the success of the **FUTURE** student as well as my other students?

### We recommend the following in no particular order:

- Provide instruction in study skills like note taking;
- Video or audio tape your class;
- Make sure that you repeat instructions/directions and write them as well;
- Maintain an up-to-date website for student reference;
- Scaffold your instruction;
- Provide notes and copies of presentations (PowerPoint, etc.);
- Summarize frequently drawing attention to major points;
- Ensure that all students are included in group activities including discussions.

### QUICK TIPS for INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

**SPEAK.** For the most part, speak normally and in the same manner you speak to anyone. Remember to speak directly to a person who has a disability. Do not consider a mentor or support person to be a conversational go-between or translator.

**TELL.** Offer information in a clear, concise, and simple manner. Sometimes added forms of visual communication such as gestures, facial expressions, pictures, or simple demonstrations are helpful. Use common words and short simple sentences, especially when giving directions. You may need to repeat or rephrase what you say, and it may be helpful to provide the instructions in writing.

**WAIT.** Allow processing time. A slow response or lack of response does not necessarily mean the person is not aware of you or what you said. Allow time for processing your words.

**LISTEN.** Concentrate on what the person is saying. If you do not understand something, ask the person to repeat what he/she said or write it down. Repeat it back to him/her to ensure the correct message was received. When appropriate, ask questions which only require short answers, or a nod of the head. Do not pretend that you understand something if you do not, and do not try and "guess" or attempt to finish the person's sentences for him/her.

**ADJUST.** If you are having doubts about being understood/understanding, alter your mode of communication. Consider writing, text messaging, or email as alternative means of communicating.

**RELAX.** Focus on the subject matter and not on disability related issues. Treat the individual with the same respect and courtesy that you extend to all of your students. Any initial concerns will quickly disappear as you focus on effective communications.

**ASK!** If you have a question about what to do, how to do it, what language or terminology to use, what assistance to offer, ask the person with the disability. That person should be your first and best resource. If you believe that an individual with a disability needs assistance, go ahead and offer the assistance — but wait for your offer to be accepted before you try to help.