



Student Handbook

Office of Disability Service

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Introduction

The Office of Disability Services and Georgia Southwestern State University is committed to assist each student in reaching maximum potential through his or her pursuit of educational goals. The Office of Disability Services primary goal is to assure equal access to all aspects of the university experience through reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services assists in the coordination of appropriate services based on the student's individual needs. Services are available to those students who choose to **self identify** and provide appropriate documentation of their disability. All services of the Office of Disability Services are provided to students with a disability at no charge.

Our mission is to promote equal educational opportunities and a welcoming academic, physical, and social environment for students with disabilities at Georgia Southwestern State University. Application for services can be found on line or in the Office of Disability Services. Student's disability documentation must be submitted to the Office of Disability Services.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact us.

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The Law

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that...

“No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States ... shall, solely by reason of ... disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

A person with a disability includes...

“any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

A “qualified person with a disability” is defined as one...

“who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity.”

Section 504 protects the rights of qualified individuals who have disabilities such as, but not limited to:

- Blindness/visual impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Cerebral palsy
- Deafness/hearing impairment
- Epilepsy or seizure disorder
- Orthopedic/mobility impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech and language disorder
- Spinal cord injury
- Tourette’s syndrome
- Attention Deficit Disorder

Chronic conditions such as:

- AIDS
- Arthritis
- Cancer
- Cardiac disease
- Diabetes
- Multiple sclerosis
- Muscular dystrophy
- Psychiatric disability

Under the provisions of Section 504 ...

Universities may not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students. Students who have self-identified, provided documentation of disability, and requested reasonable accommodations are entitled to receive approved modifications of programs, appropriate academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids that enable them to participate in and benefit from all educational programs and activities.

Section 504 specifies that universities...

May not limit the number of students with disabilities admitted

May not make pre admission inquires as to whether or not an applicant has a disability

May not use admission tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic qualifications of students with disabilities because special provisions were not made

May not exclude a qualified student with a disability from any course of study

May not establish rules and policies that may adversely affect students with disabilities

Modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities include:

- Services such as readers for students with blindness, visual impairment or learning disabilities, qualified interpreters and note takers for students with deafness or hearing impairments, and note takers for students with learning disabilities or orthopedic impairments
- Modifications, substitutions, or waivers of courses in major fields of study or degree requirements on a case by case basis
- Extra time to complete exams
- Exams to be individually proctored, read orally, dictated, or typed
- Alternative forms for students to demonstrate course mastery
- Use of computer software programs or other assistive technological devices to assist in test taking and study skills
- Removal of architectural barriers

Accommodations need not be made if the institution can demonstrate that the change requested would substantially alter essential elements of the course or program.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act contains more specific information about compliance issues in post secondary education than the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA did extend the law to cover private institutions of higher education as well as those receiving federal funding. Universities and colleges can also expect to see more rigid enforcement of the law with the passage of the ADA.

Recent Legal Decisions

The university must provide the accommodation

After providing documentation of their disability; students are not required to assume the responsibility for securing a necessary accommodation. The university is required to provide reasonable accommodations for a student's known disability so that the student has an equal opportunity to participate in the courses, activities, or programs. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) ruled that a university may not charge students for necessary accommodations.

Expense of accommodation is not undue hardship

Providing an auxiliary aid or incurring an expense to ensure access would not constitute undue hardship to the university. In determining what constitutes an undue hardship, the Office of Civil Rights views the entire financial resources of the university rather than any single department or college.

Altered form of exam

The form of an exam must be altered if the testing procedure puts a student with a disability at a disadvantage based on the student's documented disability. There may be an exception when the purpose of the test is to measure a particular skill.

Accommodation must be documented

The university may refuse to grant a student's request for an accommodation which is not specifically recommended in the student's documentation but a "good faith" effort may be applied.

Handouts in alternate format

If a student with a visual impairment is enrolled in a class, the instructor must provide all handouts in the alternate format requested by the student. In addition, all handouts must be made available to students on the same day they are distributed to non disabled students.

Classroom must be accessible

A classroom's location must be changed to provide accessibility for a student with mobility impairment. The university does not need to make every classroom accessible but must provide for the participation of students with disabilities when "viewed in its entirety."

Material on reserve in library

The instructor must make course material on reserve in the library available in alternate formats for students with visual impairments.

Extended time

Extended time is a reasonable accommodation for a student whose documentation specifically calls for that accommodation. The university is required to ensure that the student is provided additional time to complete tests and/or course work in order to provide an equal opportunity for that student.

Confidentiality of diagnostic information

Faculty does not have the right to access diagnostic information regarding a student's disability.

Faculty and staff need only know the accommodations that are necessary to guarantee an equal opportunity for the student (FERPA restrictions apply).

Personal liability

An individual faculty member who fails to provide an accommodation to a student with a documented disability may be held personally liable.

Academic freedom

Academic freedom does not permit instructors to decide if they will provide special aids and services for students with documented disabilities in the classroom.

Testing accommodations

Accommodations for testing such as readers, scribes, or the use of adaptive equipment must be provided for a student with a documented disability.

Bulletin to identify 504 coordinator

The name of the section 504 coordinator must be identified in recruiting materials such as application forms and school bulletins

Housing options

A student with a disability is entitled to have more than one housing option presented if options exist for non disabled students.

Student may file grievance

A student with a disability may not only file a claim with the U. S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, but may also file a complaint with HUD. A student is encouraged to seek resolution on campus through mediation or the published grievance procedure in the GSW Weathervane.

Personal services and aids

The University is not required to provide personal services such as attendant care or personal aids such as wheelchairs or eyeglasses.

Accessible programs

The University must operate its programs in the most integrated setting appropriate.

Housing room assignments

A student with a disability who needs attendant care is not automatically assigned to a single room.

Pre-admission

Pre-admission inquiries as to whether a person has a disability are not permissible.

Off-campus housing

If the institution provides assistance to non disabled students for off-campus housing, then the institution must provide options to students with disabilities for accessible off-campus housing.

Accommodations for standardized testing

Scholarships based on standardized test scores must allow for accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Admissions criteria

The University may not use as sole criteria for admission or rejection a test that has been shown to be discriminatory for persons with disabilities.

Weight training

University must provide comparable opportunities for weight training to students with disabilities.

Career counseling

Career counselors are prohibited from counseling a student with a disability into more restrictive career paths than are recommended to non disabled students with similar abilities and interests.

Job announcement postings

Postings for job announcements must be readily accessible to students with visual impairments.

Students Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to report to the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of every semester to sign his or her contract and obtain accommodation(s) for that semester. Students will need to bring a copy of their schedule for classes that current semester so that accommodation forms can be sent to their instructors. Students also need to notify the Office of Disability Services if they are receiving accommodations such as note takers, tutors etc. and they are withdrawing from classes.

- Students who have documentation requiring a note taker in class must still attend class. Instructors are to notify the Office of Disability Services concerning excessive student absences. The stated absence policy for the class still applies.
- Students should discuss their needs with their instructors at the start of the semester.
- Student grades will be monitored and student will receive a letter from the Office of Disability Services if grades are not up to academic standards. Students will be asked to come in and discuss this so that academic assistance can be provided.
- Student's accommodations begin after the proper documentation is received by the Office of Disability Services and application for services is complete.

Accommodation Definitions

.....
The following is a list of accommodation services that are frequently found on Individualized Accommodation Plans as recommended by the coordinator for disabilities for students with disabilities. This list is not meant to be complete, as other individualized accommodations may occasionally also appear.

Alternate Testing – An alternative format for test taking. This may include extended time, the use of a computer with a spell checker; reader, scribe (someone to physically record answers) private, distraction-free environment, large print format exams, and exams on tape or permission for the student to record answers.

Note takers – A person in the class who is a volunteer, or is paid to take notes for the student with a disability. Note takers are not to take the place of the student with a disability attending class and instructor/note taker does not need to know the name of the student.

Taped Textbooks – Texts or written classroom material in audio format. Some taped texts already recorded can be received through our services from AMAC (Alternative Media Access Center). Planning in advance is necessary to ensure that the student has the recorded text at the beginning of the semester and is the student’s responsibility to get the necessary information for their texts.

Priority Registration – A priority date to register for classes. Some disabled students are allowed to register at Early Registration if stated in their documentation; this will give the student and/or student services staff necessary time to set up accommodations that require planning in advance. Examples of these kinds of accommodations are scheduling courses with adequate time between classes if medically needed, hiring of interpreters, ordering of books on tape.

Taped Lectures – This is particularly helpful to students with a type of visual processing disorder and/or to assist the student with compensating for a lack of note taking. Permission from instructors to record lecture material is not required if it is part of an approved accommodation plan. Taping of lectures as an accommodation is not intended to be in lieu of classroom attendance.

Preferential Seating – Allowing students with a disability to sit where they need to in order to minimize disability related issues. Examples of this would include: students with physical disabilities who need to sit in the back of the room or close to the door in order to stand up at times during the class or to take short breaks; a student with ADD/ADHD may need to sit in the front of the class to better attend to the lecture.

Accessible Classrooms/Location/Furniture – Modifications to the layout, location or furniture in the classroom. This may be necessary for a student with a physical or sensory impairment. A class may need to be held in another location if it is not accessible for a student with a disability.

Extended Time for Examinations – Allowing extra time for written exams, quizzes, pop quizzes, course work and projects. This may be necessary for students who have documented disabilities relating to organization of ideas, spelling, reading comprehension, math, excessive test anxiety, or physical limitations. Students should make arrangements for extended time with each instructor within the first few weeks of the semester.

Learning Disabilities – People with learning disabilities with average or above average intelligence that have difficulties processing information in a specific area. Learning disabilities impact on the students abilities to obtain, process, or express information.

Learning disabilities may come in the form of:

- **Dyslexia** – a processing dysfunction causing difficulties with written material
- **Dyscalculia**- a processing dysfunction causing difficulties with mathematical concepts and calculation
- **Dysgraphia** – a processing dysfunction causing difficulties with writing

Reasonable Accommodations May Include:

- Taped Textbooks
- Note takers
- Priority registration
- Alternate Testing
- Taped Lectures
- Use of a computer with spell checker for examinations and assignments

* Students who identify after semester has started (documentation provided and approved) will receive accommodations from that point on but not before.

Service Animals

Therapy or emotional support animals are not considered service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended by the Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325) *and* do not qualify as service animals as an accommodation.

- Service animals are welcome in all buildings on campus and may attend any class meeting or event.
- Reasonable behavior and cleanliness are expected from service animals.
- Service animals must be under the control of the handler at all times. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. While the owner/handler is responsible for the care or supervision of the animal, campus maintenance will provide assistance in the disposal and cleanup of animal waste if needed.
- - A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken
 - if there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, the university must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to remain in the class or participate in the event without the animal's presences.
- City ordinances require that dogs or any other animal be vaccinated against rabies and also have city permit.

For more information: http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm

Documentation

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Subpart, 84.42 (b) ‘generally prohibits, except under specific circumstances, preadmission inquires as whether an individual has a handicap. Inquiries can be made, after admission, on a confidential basis, as to handicaps that may require accommodations’’. (Section 504, Compliance Handbook, Thompson Publishing Group). In order to determine eligibility for services and provide the most reasonable and appropriate accommodations, documentation of the disability must be provided by a qualified health provider. The student is responsible for obtaining the appropriate documentation. The documentation must support the need for accommodation(s) being requested. It should clarify the areas of learning which might be affected and include specific recommendations for the appropriate accommodations for the student. Criteria for acceptance of outside documentation are available at the Disability Services Office.

Additional testing or evaluation is the responsibility of the student if the documentation does not meet the Regents guidelines. Referrals to the Disability Services Office may come from any point in the university system, community or families. However, the student must **self-identify**, make contact with the Disability Services Office, and provide adequate documentation before accommodations can be provided. Faculty who suspects that a student may have a disability should refer the student to the Disability Services Office so that adequate and proper documentation is obtained.

Self- disclosure and documentation can be initiated anytime during the year. However, reasonable time must be allowed before the student can expect accommodations to be in place. Accommodations can be retroactive and begin only after documentation and reasonable time for accommodation development is allowed. If the student has been afforded accommodations (by a previous coordinator) but is found not to have sufficient documentation, then the student is notified by letter and given a semester to obtain sufficient documentation. Students will be notified if documentation is adequate for the accommodation requested. If there are questions students are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services.

Who provides Verifying Documentation?

In most cases, documentation will be needed from licensed psychologists, medical doctors, psychiatrists, and/or neurologists. The Board of Regents requires specific documentation for learning disabilities, psychological disabilities, and cognitive disabilities.

To review USG BOR policies regarding disabilities, please see the following websites:

General Documentation Guidelines:

http://www.usg.edu/academic_affairs_handbook/section3/C793/#pappendix_d_disability_documentation

Specific Documentation Guidelines:

http://www.usg.edu/academic_affairs_handbook/section3/C793/#pappendix_e_specific_documentation_guidelines

Document Requirement Forms:

ADHD Verification Form

Regents Center for Learning Disorders at Georgia State University

ADHD Verification

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at each institution provides academic services and accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The documentation provided regarding the disability diagnosis must demonstrate a disability covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended (ADAAA). The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) is one such disability. In order for a student to be considered eligible to receive academic accommodations, the documentation must also show functional limitations that impact the individual in the academic setting.

The Board of Regents (BOR) for the University System of Georgia (USG) requires current and comprehensive documentation of AD/HD in order to determine appropriate services and accommodations. The outline below has been developed to assist the student in working with the treating or diagnosing healthcare professional(s) in obtaining the specific information necessary to evaluate eligibility for academic accommodations.

- A. The healthcare professional(s) conducting the assessment and/or making the diagnosis must be qualified to do so. These persons are generally licensed psychologists or board certified members of a medical specialty.
- B. All parts of the form must be completed as thoroughly as possible. Inadequate information, incomplete answers and/or illegible handwriting will delay the eligibility review process by necessitating follow up contact for clarification.
- C. The healthcare provider should attach any reports which provide additional related information (e.g., psycho-educational testing, neuropsychological test results, etc.). If a comprehensive diagnostic report is available that provides the requested information, copies of that report can be submitted for documentation instead of this form. Please do not provide case notes or rating scales without a narrative that interprets the results.
- D. After completing this form, sign it, complete the Healthcare Provider Information section on the last page and return it to the student, who will give it to the Disability Services Provider at her/his institution. The information you provide will not become part of the student's educational records, but it will be kept in the student's file in the ODS, where it will remain confidential. This

form may be released to the student at his/her request. In addition to the requested information, please attach any other information you think would be relevant to the student's academic adjustment. If you have questions regarding this form, please call the Regents Center for Learning Disorders at Georgia State University at 404-413-6245. Thank you for your assistance.

ADHD Documentation Form

STUDENT INFORMATION

(Student should complete this section)

(Please print legibly or type)

Name (Last, First, Middle): _____

Date of Birth: _____ Institution: _____

Status (check one: current student transfer student prospective student)

Local phone: (____)-_____-_____- Cell phone: (____)-_____-_____

Address: _____

E-mail address: _____

DIAGNOSTIC INFORMATION

(To be completed by Healthcare Provider: please print legibly or type)

Please provide responses to the following items by typing or writing in a legible fashion. Illegible forms will delay the documentation review process for the student.

1. DSM-IV diagnosis:

314.00

Predominantly Inattentive

Predominantly Hyperactive-Impulsive

314.01 Combined type

__ 314.9 Not otherwise specified

2. State the following:

a. date of first contact with student: _____

b. date of diagnosis: _____

c. date of last contact with student: _____

d. comorbid conditions/differential diagnosis : _____

3. Student's History

a. AD/HD History (inattention and/or hyperactivity during childhood): Document symptoms that were present during early school years. Provide information supporting the diagnosis based on independent sources (e.g., past evaluations, school records, teacher report).

b. Medical History: Provide relevant medical history. Is the student currently taking medication for AD/HD? Are they experiencing any side effects with this medication?

4. Student's **Current Specific** Symptoms

Please check all ADHD symptoms listed in the DSM-IV that the student currently exhibits:

Inattention:

__often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work or other activities

___ often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities

___ often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly

___ often does not follow through on instructions and details to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand instructions)

___ often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities

___ often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks (such as schoolwork or homework) that require sustained mental effort

___ often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g. school assignments, pencils, books, tools, etc.)

___ is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli

___ often forgetful in daily activities

Hyperactivity:

___ often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat

___ often leaves (or greatly feels the need to leave) seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected

___ often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate (in adolescents or adults, may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness)

___ often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities that are more sedate

___ is often "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor"

___ often talks excessively

Impulsivity:

___ often blurts out answers before questions have been completed

___ often has difficulty awaiting turn

___ often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g. butts into conversations or games)

5. State the student's functional limitations based on the AD/HD diagnosis, specifically in a classroom or educational setting.

6. State specific recommendations regarding academic accommodations for this student, and a rationale as to why these accommodations/services are warranted based upon the student's specific functional limitations.

7. Please document impairment across at least two setting by independent observers other than patient and clinician.

8. Please document retrospective childhood and current adult behavior using rating scales with appropriate norms. (Please attach copies of completed forms.)

HEALTHCARE PROVIDER INFORMATION

(Please sign & date below and fill in all other fields completely using PRINT or TYPE)

Provider Signature: _____ Date: _____

Provider Name (Print): _____

Title: _____

License or Certification #: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: (_____) - _____ - _____

FAX Number: (_____) - _____ - _____

5/17/11

Autism and Pervasive Disorders

Pervasive developmental disorders are characterized by severe and pervasive impairment in several areas of development including reciprocal social interaction skills, communication skills, or the presence of stereotyped behavior, interests, and activities. Several different disorders fall within this category including Asperger's Disorder and Autistic Disorder.

Autistic Disorder

Autistic Disorder is a pervasive developmental disorder characterized by qualitative impairment in social interactions, qualitative impairment in communication affecting both verbal and nonverbal communication skills, and the presence of repetitive and stereotyped behaviors, interests, and activities.

- Specific documentation guidelines for Autistic Disorder include the following:
- General documentation guidelines listed in [Appendix D](#)
- Diagnosis and corresponding code from the most recent DSM
- Assessment of the following diagnostic criteria is required and evaluation results must be included in the documentation:
 - Developmental history that includes evidence of Autistic Disorder symptoms in childhood
 - Documentation of current qualitative impairment in social interaction
 - Documentation of current qualitative impairment in communication

- Documentation of current restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities
- Assessment of broad cognitive ability and language function using standardized assessment measures with age-appropriate norms

Learning disability documentation criteria

For accepting outside evaluation:

(Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 2.22.03)

The Board of Regents endorsed criteria for the evaluation of learning disabilities in September, 1991. All System institutions should be reviewing outside evaluations for students with learning disabilities based on these criteria. These criteria were established in an effort to assure that all institutions of the University System employ the same definition and evaluation model. Following is a simplified and updated version of the criteria for use by System institutions and professionals conducting private evaluations who request the criteria. In addition, clinicians might also review the Association of Higher Education Administrators of Disabilities (AHEAD) Guidelines for Documentation of a Learning Disability or the Guidelines and Questionnaire for Test Accommodations for Examinees with Disabilities prepared by the United States Medical Licensing Examination Board (www.nbme.org), as they provide similar but more detailed guidance regarding the criteria used for evaluating outside evaluations for these organizations. The Regents policies are generally consistent with these other nationally recognized general guidelines, although specific criteria within the Regents policy may differ. See the AHEAD website for why postsecondary education may request documentation. http://www.ahead.org/resources/documentation_guidance

Secondary education eligibility reports, individualized educational plans and provision of special education services in and of themselves are not sufficient documentation for college-level accommodations, although this information should be included with reports from any comprehensive evaluation. If no prior services or accommodations have been provided, this needs to be carefully explained as learning disabilities and related disorders are not typically newly identified in adulthood.

GEORGIA BOARD OF REGENTS CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTING OUTSIDE EVALUATIONS DOCUMENTING LEARNING DISABILITIES

1. Documentation must be within 3 years of the student's application for assistance. (The exception to this guideline is if the evaluation was completed after the student was 18 years of

age and the evaluation utilized appropriate adult standardized tests and is still considered by an RCLD to adequately represent an individual's current functioning.) Documentation must be comprehensive, including history, diagnostic interviews, test results (including standardized test scores when available), differential diagnosis, details regarding a student's functional limitations, and recommendations for accommodations which are appropriate in college, graduate or professional educational settings.

2. A specific learning disability must be stated within the documentation submitted. The criteria a student must exhibit are one or more, but not all, areas of specific academic deficits; a correlated cognitive or information processing deficit; and average intellectual ability. If another diagnosis is applicable, it should be stated. The evaluation must be signed by a professional with expertise in evaluating adult populations and appropriately licensed by the state.
3. One of the following individually administered general intelligence tests must have been utilized:
 - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS-III)
 - Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-III (WISC-III)
 - Stanford Binet IV
 - Kaufman Adult Intelligence Test - (KAIT)

Please list subscale scores.

4. Cognitive or information processing strengths, weaknesses, and deficits should be specifically discussed. Clear documentation of deficit areas is necessary in order for colleges to provide appropriate modifications. Please discuss all of the following processing areas:
 - Visual-spatial abilities
 - Memory
 - Fine motor/dexterity
 - Executive Functions (It is also helpful to know about the student's cognitive or processing flexibility and automaticity with cognitive and academic tasks.)
 - Attention
5. Oral language skills should be assessed and discussed. Formal language evaluation and/or an informal analysis of a language sample are appropriate. Colleges are primarily interested in whether or not a student's language disability is impacting oral or written language and/or if a separate speech disorder is also present. The assessment of auditory comprehension is also helpful.
6. Social-emotional status should be assessed and discussed. Formal assessment instruments and/or clinical interview are appropriate. Colleges need to know differential diagnoses of psychological disorders that impact upon academics from learning disabilities (e.g., anxiety, mood disorders, substance abuse). College is typically quite stressful for students who have learning disorders. In an attempt to best serve students, it is also helpful to know about their personality characteristics, psychological welfare, self-esteem and stress level.
7. Achievement assessment in the following areas is required:
 - Written Language (spelling and written expression). If a written language sample is available to review, this is most helpful.

- Reading (decoding, word attack, and comprehension). Please indicate the student's ability to comprehend longer passages, more typical of college text than some assessment instruments provide, and their automaticity and fluency in reading appropriate level texts.
 - Mathematics (applied word problems, calculations, algebra). Please indicate whether or not the student was successful with algebra problems. Scores rarely provide this. For example, students can score within the low average range on the WRAT without attempting any of the algebra problems.
8. Assessment instruments must have age appropriate norms for high school seniors/college freshmen or older nontraditional students. All standardized measures must be represented by standard scores and percentile ranks based on published norms. These can certainly be supplemented by informal assessment.

Medical Health Disability Documentation Criteria:

I, (print name) _____, am requesting accommodations from Georgia Southwestern State University Office of Disability Services for a medical condition/disability. Because appropriate accommodations are based on the nature of the disability and the academic environment, please provide the information below.

 Student Signature GSW ID #: _____ Date: _____

To Be Filled Out by Physician/Appropriate Professional

1. Primary Diagnosis:

Secondary Diagnosis:

Date of onset: _____ Date of last visit: _____

Frequency of office visits: _____

2. Describe the functional/physical limitations that affect this student's ability to conduct major life activities.

3. Describe any functional limitations in this student's cognitive abilities due to the medical condition. Also provide any recommended compensatory strategies.

Limitation Recommendation

4. Describe frequency of episodes if known.

5. Medication prescribed and expected side effects that can interfere with cognition and performance in an academic environment.

Medication Side Effects

PLEASE PRINT

Provider name: _____ Title: _____

License #: _____

Address:

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Provider Signature: _____ Date: _____

Georgia Southwestern State University
Office of Disability Services
Phone: 229-931-2661 Fax: 229-931-2958

Letter for requesting physical disability documentation

[Printer-friendly version](#)

Dear Doctor:

In order to receive appropriate academic and/or physical accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 allow institutions to request supporting documentation of a disability. Without such written documentation, a student will be

unable to receive appropriate academic accommodations that may be critical for his/her success. If you prefer to use this form rather than a narrative report, please indicate each of the criterion that are applicable to this student. The documentation for eligibility should be current, preferably within the last three years.

Student's name: _____

Student's GSW ID: _____

Medical Diagnosis: _____

Present Symptoms: _____

1. Which of these major life activities is substantially limited by this student's disability (in the academic setting)?
 - caring for one's self
 - performing manual tasks
 - walking
 - seeing
 - hearing
 - speaking
 - breathing
 - learning
 - working
 - other:
 - none of the above (please explain):
2. Statement of severity and duration of the impairment:
3. Statement of permanent or long term impact of the impairment:
4. What treatment or medication is prescribed for this condition?
5. How does this condition and/or the effects of the medication limit the student's ability to learn and/or meet the demands of the academic program (please use additional pages if necessary)?
6. Effects of medication:
 - a. drowsiness
 - b. impaired motor skills
 - c. decreased concentration
 - d. other (please specify): _____
 - e. not applicable
7. Based on the results of your evaluation, what accommodations would you suggest for academic adjustments?
 - extended time on exams
 - exams in a distraction free environment
 - use of note takers

- alternative test format
 - tutorial service
 - priority enrollment
 - special seating arrangements
 - breaks during instruction
 - reduced course load
 - use of adaptive technology
 - voice activated software
 - word processor
 - screen reader
 - other (please specify):
 - other adjustments (please explain):
 - no adjustments needed (please explain):
8. Hearing impairments: Please include a current (no more than three years old) audio logical report from a licensed audiologist.
9. Visual impairments: Please include a current (no more than three years old) eye examination from a licensed ophthalmologist.
10. Physical/health impairments: Please include a current history and physical report.
- Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

Office phone: _____

License #: _____

Psychological disability documentation criteria

For Accepting Outside Evaluation:

1. Documentation of an adult level (18 years or older) evaluation. Documentation must be current (within three years).
2. To receive services, students must present appropriate documentation of their disability. This means a diagnosis by licensed psychiatrist, licensed doctoral-level clinical educational psychologist, or a combination of such professionals. The documentation must include the following:
 - Clear statement of the DSM IV diagnosis with Axis.
 - Summary of procedures and instruments used to make the diagnosis.

- A summary of evaluation results, including standardized scores, if available.
 - Past and present symptoms which meet the criteria for diagnosis.
 - Medical history relating to current use of medication and the impact of the medication on the student's ability to meet the demands of the academic program.
 - Statement of impact and limitations on student's academic performance.
 - Recommendations for academic adjustments to compensate for the disability.
3. Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if co-existing learning disabilities or other disabling conditions are indicated.
4. Accommodations are always individually determined, and may include, but are not limited to: extended time on exams, exams in a distraction-free environment, note takers, alternative test format, tutorial services, priority enrollment, registration assistance, special seating arrangements, breaks during instruction, reduced course load.
- To help us make that determination, please include responses to the following questions in your report:
- What is the DSM-IV diagnosis with Axis?
 - What assessment instruments were used to make the diagnosis, and what results were revealed?
 - What present or past symptoms were displayed that meet the criteria for diagnosis?
 - What treatment and/or medication is prescribed?
 - How does this condition or the effects of the medication limit the student's ability to learn, or to meet the demands of the academic program?
 - Based on the results of your evaluation, what recommendations can you suggest for academic adjustments?

Traumatic Brain Injury

Brain injury can result from external trauma, such as a closed head or an object penetration injury, or internal trauma, such as a cerebral vascular accident or tumor. ABI can cause physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and vocational changes that can affect an individual for a short period of time or permanently. Depending on the location and extent of the injury, symptoms can vary widely. Understanding functional changes after an injury and resulting implications for education are more important than only knowing the cause or type of injury.

Specific documentation guidelines for ABI include the following:

- General documentation guidelines listed in Appendix D.

- Documentation of date of occurrence/diagnosis and the nature of the neurological illness or traumatic event that resulted in brain injury.
- Depending upon the functional domains impacted by the injury, assessments of cognitive and academic deficits and strengths, psychosocial-emotional functioning, and/or motor/sensory abilities relevant to academic functioning may be essential components of documentation of the impact of an acquired brain injury for an individual student.
- Impairments following an acquired brain injury may change rapidly in the weeks and months after the injury, and a more stable picture of residual weaknesses may not be apparent for 1-2 years after an injury. More recent documentation may be necessary to adequately assess the student's current accommodation needs.
- Cognitive and academic processing weaknesses and strengths must be evident on multiple measures and not based on a single discrepant score:
 - Academic Achievement
 - Reading (decoding, fluency, and comprehension)
 - Mathematics (calculations, math fluency, applied reasoning)
 - Written Language (spelling, fluency, written expression)
 - Cognitive Processing Skills
 - Attention
 - Executive Functions
 - Fluency/Automaticity
 - Memory/Learning
 - Oral Language
 - Phonological/Orthographic Processing
 - Visual-Motor
 - Visual-Perceptual/Visual-Spatial

How current should the documentation be?

In general, colleges and universities across the nation ask for documentation that is between two and five years old. The assessment of the student should be done as an adult (age 18 and over). The documentation should describe the “current” functional impact of the disability.

Who must provide verifying documentation?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ACT) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are quite specific in that the student is responsible for providing adequate and current documentation.

The Office of Disability Services may assist students in acquiring adequate documentation from their health care providers after the student has demonstrated that he/she has made a reasonable effort to do this. For instance, if the documentation lacks important information such as a signature, accommodation recommendations, or a functional impact statement.

The Office of Disability Services is committed to ensuring that all information regarding a student remains confidential as permitted by law. This information may include grades, biographical history, and disability information and case notes. No one has immediate access to the student files in the Office of Disability Services except authorized staff. No confidential information will be released to a third party unless a written consent form (obtainable through Office of Disability Services) is signed by student. Disability related information is to be treated as medical information. For example, university faculty and staff do not have the right or need to access diagnostic or other information regarding a student's disability-related needs. Parents are not given information about a student's academic progress. A student may sign a written consent form giving our office permission to discuss the disability with faculty, staff, parents and/or advisors who require further information. Information will not be released without consent unless federal or state law requires it. Faculty members should not publicly refer to or single out a student's disability in written or oral form without prior consent of the student. Inquires of how a student should be accommodated should be made in private. Faculty members can inquire about the effectiveness of an accommodation and may initiate discussion with the student and appropriate faculty members about accommodation procedures.

If you have a documented disability as defined by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 933-112 Section 504), you may be eligible to receive accommodations.

A student is considered disabled when they are regarded as having or has a history of an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity (caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working).

Accommodations will be provided only with appropriate documentation. Documentation must be on file for each disability for which a student requests accommodations. For instance, if a student has a learning disability and a mobility impairment, specific documentation must be on file for both.

Temporary Disabilities

Temporary disabilities are not covered under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act unless the impairment substantially limits a major activity. The issue of whether a temporary impairment is significant enough to be a disability must be resolved on a case by case basis, taking into consideration both the duration of the impairment and the extent to which it actually limits a major life activity of the affected individual (ADA Technical Assistance Manual, Department of Justice).

Students seeking accommodations or services on the basis of a temporary disability must provide documentation verifying the nature of the condition, stating the expected duration, and describing the accommodation deemed necessary. The assessment or verification of disability should not be more than 30 days old and should reflect the student's current level of disability; temporary accommodations are valid for one semester.

Continuance of accommodations beyond one semester is allowed only with supporting documentation. The cost of obtaining the professional verification is the responsibility of the student. Students must also sign a Temporary Accommodation Agreement produced by the Office of Disability Services.

Test Procedures and Proctoring

When it is documented for a student to have testing accommodations, it is the responsibility of the student to initiate testing accommodations with their instructors. In the event the instructor is unable to proctor an exam with accommodations the Office of Disability Services may proctor the exams. Students should notify the Office of Disability Services at least three days in advance of test day and time. The Office of Disability Services will contact student's instructor via email concerning exam and instructions for proctoring exams. Students should test the same day and time as the class unless other days and times are negotiated between student and instructor. The Office of Disability Services will need to know the changes in a timely manner in order to ensure space for testing. Student's who do not show for the scheduled exam and have not notified the Office of Disability Services will have their exams sent back to their instructor. Students will not be allowed to take anything into the testing room other than the exam, writing utensil unless instructor has given written permission to the Office of Disability Services to do so. Student will have to leave books, cell phones, purses, hats, scarves and other personal materials outside of the testing room. Students may ask to have their personal items stored in one of the staff offices. The Office of Disability Services is not responsible for items left outside of testing rooms. Students will not be permitted to leave the testing room unless breaks are stated in their documentation. The Office of Disability Services **will not tolerate cheating on exams.** If there is a suspicion of or if a student is caught cheating, the following procedure is followed:

- The student is confronted with the allegation of cheating or the observation of actual cheating.
- The student is asked to turn in any material used on the test that were not permitted for use during testing
- The student is told that the allegations or cheating observation will be documented and the instructor will be notified. The decision on course of action at that time is left to the discretion of the faculty member within established institutional policies.

Verifying Disability Related Absences and Procedures

Verifying disability related absences procedures is the responsibility of the student. The Office of Disability Services does not excuse students or establish attendance policies. The verification of a student's disability related absence notifies instructors of the absence being legitimate due to the student's disability. Disability related absences apply to such situations as excessive pain, hospitalization, illness related to student's disability, and lengthy treatment processes such as chemotherapy. These are determined on a case by case basis. Verification of a disability usually does not apply to routine appointments to a health care provider.

A verification of the student's absence from class because of a disability related circumstance from their health care provider will need to be brought to the Office of Disability Services. This documentation obtained from the student's health care provider should establish the reason for the disability related absence. In the event the student has an unexpected disability related circumstance where hospitalization or illness is encountered, the student should notify or have someone notify the Office of Disability Services and student's instructors so that arrangements can be made concerning missed assignments and notes. The instructor will be asked to contact the Office of Disability Services if a student has missed more than the allotted days on the syllabus given to the student at the beginning of the semester.

A medical withdrawal may be considered if the student's health care provider, Dean of Students, and/or counselor advise the student to do so. Attendance policies are not determined by the Office of Disability Services; the faculty of the university individually determines these policies, and attendance may be fundamental to the course objectives and participation. The faculty member determines if attendance and participation are considered to be integral components to the learning process. If the student is not meeting those requirements, he or she may not be otherwise qualified to attend classes at that point in time. Faculty is not required to lower or affect substantial modifications of standards for accommodation purposes.

Grievance Procedure

(Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disability Act)
The Office of Disability Services attempts to resolve disputes or complaints for students with disabilities on an informal basis by assisting in the communication process between parties involved. In compliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), 38 CFR 35.105.35.150© and (d) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, the following is the grievance procedure for students with disabilities.

If the student has a complaint about the handling of an ADA related matter he/she should first discuss the issue with the coordinator for the Office of Disability Services. This process must be initiated within 30 days of the objectionable action or occurrence.

- The coordinator of the Office of Disability Services will confer with the party or parties whom the complaint is reported against for possible solutions in ten class days.
- The coordinator will review the complaint and report back to the parties involved within five days.
- If no solution can be established and/ or if the student is not satisfied with the solution, he/she may file a written complaint within the guidelines of the student handbook (Procedures for Appeals of Grades & Other Academic Concerns, 58 - 61) of the GSW Weathervane
- A complaint should be filed in writing and should contain the name, address of the person filing it. It should also briefly state the circumstances and complaint.
- Upon the filing of any complaint, a copy of such complaint shall be furnished to the parties or party named that allegedly committed a discriminatory practice. As part of the investigation process, the respondent will be asked to file an answer to the complaint.

Every attempt will be made to resolve all grievances internally at the point of origin in a timely manner. Although students with disabilities are encouraged to attempt to resolve a grievance within campus process, they have the right to file any grievance with the Office of Civil Rights at any time.

Appendix M

Confidentiality of Student Records: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

1. Georgia Southwestern State University is covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, which is designed to protect students' rights in regard to education records maintained by the institution. Under the Act, students have the following rights:
 - a. the right to inspect and review education records maintained by the institution that pertain to you;
 - b. the right to challenge the content of records (except grades that can only be challenged through the Grade Appeal Process) on the grounds that they are inaccurate, misleading or a violation of your privacy or other rights; and
 - c. the right to control disclosures from your education records with certain exceptions.

2. Any student who is or has been in attendance at Georgia Southwestern State University has the right to inspect and review his or her educational records within a reasonable period of time (not to exceed 45 days) after making a written request. However, the student shall not have access to:
 - a. Financial records of parents.
 - b. Confidential letters of recommendation placed in record prior to January 1, 1975.
 - c. Letters of recommendation concerning admission, application for employment or honors for which the student has voluntarily signed a waiver.

3. Directory information will be treated as public information and be generally available on all students and former students, at the discretion of the university. Directory information includes the student's name; telephone number; major field of study; dates of attendance; degrees, honors and awards received; level, and full or part time status. Participation in officially recognized sports; height, weight, age, home-town and general interest items of members of athletic teams is also included in Directory Information.

4. Requests for Education Records should be made in writing to the Registrar, Georgia Southwestern State University. "Education Records" means generally any record maintained by or for Georgia Southwestern State University and containing information directly related to the student's academic activities.

5. Students who challenge the correctness of student educational records shall file a written request for amendment with the Registrar. The student shall also present to the Registrar copies of all available evidence relating to the data or material being challenged. The Registrar shall forward the information to the custodian of the record who will consider the request and shall notify the student in writing within 15 business days whether the request will be granted or denied. During that time, any challenge may be settled informally between the student, or the parents of a dependent student, and the custodian of the records, in consultation with other appropriate University officials. If an agreement is reached it shall be in writing and signed by all parties involved. A copy of such agreement will be maintained in the student's record. If an agreement is not reached informally or, if the request for amendment is denied, the student shall have the right to challenge through the Grievance Procedure outlined in the Student Handbook.

6. Release of protected information in the student's educational record without consent will be allowed to:
 - a. Institutional personnel who have a legitimate educational interest.
 - b. Officials of other schools where the student seeks to enroll. Efforts will be made to notify the student of the release of such information.
 - c. Representatives of Federal agencies authorized by law to have access to education records, and state education authorities.
 - d. Appropriate persons in connection with a student's application for or receipt of financial aid.
 - e. State and local officials to whom information must be released pursuant to a state statute adopted prior to November 19, 1974.
 - f. Organizations conducting studies for the institution.
 - g. Accrediting organizations.
 - h. Parents of a dependent student, as determined by the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.
 - i. Persons necessary in emergency situations to protect health and safety.
 - j. Persons designated in subpoenas or court orders.

7. If a request for Education Records is not covered by the Annual Disclosure Statement provided by the Registrar, the written request for release of information should be submitted to the Registrar and contains the following information:
 - a. Specific records to be released.
 - b. Reasons for such release.
 - c. To whom records are to be released.
 - d. Date.
 - e. Signature of the student.

8. Records will be released in compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. However, reasonable efforts will be made to notify the student in advance of compliance.

9. Students have the right to obtain copies of official transcripts provided all financial obligations to the University have been met. Students will be charged at the prevailing rate for each certified transcript obtained. Copies of other information in the student's education record will be provided at a cost of \$0.25 per page of copy.

10. Students who feel that their rights have been violated under the provisions of the Family Educational and Privacy Act should write to the following office: Department of Education, 330 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20201.

11. Georgia has an Open Records Act. All records kept by Georgia Southwestern State University, except those protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 are subject to public open records requests. Requests for public open records should be submitted in writing to the Director of Human Resources, Georgia Southwestern State University.