
COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

Disability Services and Accommodations Procedures

Policy Name: *Disability Services and Accommodations Procedures*

Policy Owner: Center for Accommodation and Access

Responsible University Office: Center for Accommodation and Access

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Related Policies: Evacuation Guidelines, Attendance and Students with Disabilities, Disability Services and Accommodations Procedures, Grievance Procedure and Students with Disabilities, Off-Campus Programing and Internships, Personal Attendant, Physical Accommodations, Service Animals, Services to Students (SSD) Record Retention Policy, Temporary Disabilities, Testing Administration Procedures, and Emotional Support Animal

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF POLICY

This document describes the services offered by the Center for Accommodation and Access and the procedures for obtaining those services.

III. DEFINITIONS

The definition of “**disability**” in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, P.L. 101-336 (July 26, 1990), as amended by P.L. 110–325 (September 25, 2008) draws substantially from existing legislation, namely Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988. The ADA defines disability with respect to an individual, as:

- a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such an individual
- a record of such an impairment; or
- being regarded as having such impairment.

"Major life activities" is defined as an individual being limited in his or her ability to perform such functions as self-care, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, neurological, digestive, or respiratory.

A **"reasonable accommodation"** is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service activity, or facility. It enables a qualified student with a disability an opportunity to attain the same level of performance or enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to similarly situated students without disabilities.

IV. POLICY SECTION

Educational institutions are required to provide reasonable, appropriate, and effective accommodations for disabilities that have been adequately documented and for which the accommodation has been requested.

All employees have an obligation to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to programs and services of the university. Academic competence should not be compromised in the process of accommodating students with disabilities. The same level of academic performance should be expected from students with disabilities as those without disabilities. Evaluation of academic work should be consistent and no different from students without disabilities. Students with disabilities are expected to adhere to academic standards and conduct policies of the university.

Faculty and staff members should not publicly refer to or single out a student's disability in written or oral form without prior consent of the student. Inquiries 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 CAA regarding accommodations.

The Center for Accommodation and Access is committed to ensuring that all information regarding a student remains confidential as permitted by law. Only authorized staff have immediate access to the student files in the Center for Accommodation and Access. University faculty and staff have neither the right nor the need to access diagnostic or other information regarding a student's disability-related needs. Information may be released with a signed consent from student for educational purposes or in emergency cases, such as a direct threat to self or others.

V. PROCEDURES

In order for services to be provided, the student must self-identify with the Center for Accommodation and Access. Appropriate documentation must be provided that indicates the nature of the accommodation needed or that provides information adequate to determine a reasonable accommodation. A CAA Program Coordinator or Director will review the provided documentation and meet with the student to discuss what reasonable accommodations would best fit the student's needs; together they will develop the student's Reasonable Accommodation Plan. The Reasonable Accommodation Plan can be modified during the student's time at CSU. Each semester the student should request Letters of Accommodation from

the CAA, which will be provided to the student's professors with a faculty signature sheet for the faculty member to sign; the faculty signature sheet should be returned to the CAA.

A. Identification

Referrals to the Center for Accommodation and Access may come from within the university system or community. However, the student must self-identify, make contact with the Center for Accommodation and Access, and provide adequate documentation before accommodations can be provided. Faculty who suspect that a student may have a disability should refer the student to the Center for Accommodation and Access so that adequate and proper documentation is obtained.

B. Documentation

In order to determine eligibility for services and to provide the most reasonable and appropriate accommodations, documentation of the disability must be provided by a qualified healthcare provider. The student is responsible for obtaining the appropriate documentation.

The documentation must support the need for the accommodation(s) being requested. It should clarify the areas of learning that might be affected and include specific recommendations for the appropriate accommodations for the student. Additional testing may be requested if the evaluation provided does not meet the University System of Georgia (USG) Board of Regents (BOR) guidelines. Costs related to testing or evaluation is the responsibility of the student.

If the student has made a reasonable effort to obtain documentation from the health care provider and it is not complete, the Center for Accommodation and Access may intervene in obtaining the information upon the student's request. At times, the documentation may not be complete (i.e. missing a signature, accommodations, etc) and the Center for Accommodation and Access will return the documentation back to the healthcare provider. This is done on an individual basis.

C. Determining Accommodations

The university is obligated to provide accommodations only to the known limitations of an otherwise qualified student with a disability. Reasonable accommodations are determined on an individual basis. To assist in determining reasonable accommodations, the Center for Accommodation and Access may seek information from appropriate university personnel regarding essential standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities.

Reasonable accommodations are determined by examining:

- the barriers resulting from interaction between the documented disability and the campus environment;
- the possible accommodations that might remove barriers;
- whether or not the student has access to the course, program, service, activity, or facility without accommodations; and
- whether or not essential elements of the course, program, service, activity, or facility are compromised by accommodations.

The following analysis is used to evaluate accommodation requests:

- Does the student have a disability and is the disability documented by a qualified professional? The amount of required documentation will be based upon the nature of the disability as well as the nature and duration of the accommodation.
- Is the student "otherwise qualified"?
- Did the student request the accommodation and is it appropriate to the needs of a student or prospective student with that type of disability and for the situation?
- Was the request submitted in a manner consistent with established policy and procedures?
- Is the request reasonable and/or readily achievable?
- Is the nature of the program or activity fundamentally altered by the provision of the accommodation?
- Does the provision of the accommodation present an undue financial burden or administrative burden on the university?

Self-disclosure and documentation can occur anytime during the year. However, reasonable time must be allowed before the student can expect accommodations to be in place. Accommodations cannot 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 to not have sufficient documentation, then the student is notified and given a semester to obtain sufficient documentation, while being accommodated temporarily.

According to the ADA Technical Assistance Manual, Section II-3.6200, Columbus State University, a public entity, is not required to provide individuals with disabilities with personal or individually prescribed devices such as wheelchairs, prescription eyeglasses, or hearing aids; or to provide readers for personal use or study or a Personal Aide in such areas as eating, toileting, or dressing, per Section 504 of the Rehab Act of 1973, Subpart E (34 CFR Part 104.44).

D. Procedures for Receiving Accommodations

A CAA program coordinator or director will review the provided documentation and meet with the student to discuss what reasonable accommodations would best fit the student's needs; together they will develop the student's Reasonable Accommodation Plan. The Reasonable Accommodation Plan can be modified during the student's time at CSU. New accommodations will only be granted two weeks before the end of the semester. Accommodations can be added to the Reasonable Accommodation Plan but they will not be required to be provided for the remainder of that semester.

Each semester the student should request Letters of Accommodation from the CAA, which will be provided to the student's professors with a faculty signature sheet for the faculty member to sign; the faculty signature sheet should be returned to the CAA. Signature sheets must be returned to the CAA before the student can take tests there. Letters are not issued after the midpoint in the semester without special permission from the CAA director or program coordinator.

Faculty members have the liberty to inquire about the effectiveness of any accommodation. They

may privately initiate discussion with the CAA and the individual student about accommodation procedures. Once faculty members receive notification of a student's accommodations and verification of disability, they may choose to alter the modification only with mutual consent of the student. Faculty should also contact the Center for Accommodation and Access as to the feasibility of such alterations.

E. Procedures Pertaining to Interpreter and Captioning Services

Local and national shortages of sign language interpreters make providing their services a serious concern to the Center for Accommodation and Access. Captioning is an area of service requiring sufficient lead-time to make arrangements with the company providing the services. Students are urged to pay close attention to the following procedures/policies when arranging services. Entities on campus who need interpreter services must schedule with the Center for Accommodation and Access at least two weeks in advance of the event.

Students are responsible for notifying the Center for Accommodation and Access for the need of an interpreter for classes or other activities related to their classes. Other entities on campus that need interpreting services should contact the Center for Accommodation and Access at least two weeks in advance of the event.

1. Participate in priority registration. Early registration is your best assurance of receiving services promptly. Switching sections or making schedule changes may present problems in providing services. To prevent interruption in services or the possible loss of an interpreter/captionist because of scheduling problems, we urge you to stay as close to your original schedule as possible.
2. Notify the Center for Accommodation and Access if there is any change in your schedule once the semester has commenced.
3. All requests for services for events require at least two weeks notification to allow time for finding an interpreter/captionist.
4. Cancellation of any reservation to use services requires 24 hours' notice before the particular class or event.
5. If the student has not arrived by fifteen minutes after a class session or event is scheduled to begin the interpreter and/or captionist will leave. The Center for Accommodation and Access will document the student's absence.
6. If the student fails to inform the Center for Accommodation and Access that services are not needed more than three times, services will be discontinued.
7. To reinstate services, the student must meet with the Director of the Center for Accommodation and Access and sign agreement of student responsibility.

F. Adaptive Technology Laboratory

The Center for Accommodation and Access has an adaptive technology laboratory for students who need specialized equipment in accessing hardware and software. Students, faculty, and staff who wish to use the equipment must schedule the room at least three days in advance.

V. Rights and Responsibilities

Students with disabilities have the right to:

- Full and equal participation in the services and activities of Columbus State University
- Reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services supported by appropriate documentation
- Have confidential information not freely disseminated throughout the campus
- Limit access to confidential records. In doing so, students recognize that implementing accommodations may become more difficult
- Information readily available in accessible formats

Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities
- Identify as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel, and assistance, as necessary
- Provide documentation from an appropriate professional stating and explaining how the disability limits their participation in courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities
- Follow published procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services, or requesting barrier removal
- Seek accommodations in a timely manner every semester

Columbus State University, through faculty and staff, has the right to:

- Establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, and standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, facilities, and to evaluate students on this basis
- Confirm disability standards in developing, constructing, remodeling and maintaining facilities and to evaluate students on this basis
- Confirm disability status, request and receive current, relevant documentation that supports requests for documentation that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and /or auxiliary aids and services
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services, and/or barrier removal in facilities if the documentation does not demonstrate that the request is warranted, or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation
- Select among equally effective accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services
- Refuse unreasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services, and/or facility-related barrier removal requests that impose a fundamental alteration on a program or activity of the university

Columbus State University has the responsibility to:

- Provide information to faculty, staff, students, and guests with disabilities in accessible formats upon request
- Ensure that courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities - when viewed in

- their entirety - are available and usable in the most integrated and appropriate settings
- Respond to requests in a timely manner
 - Provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities in courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities
 - Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communications except where permitted or required by law

VII. RELATED BOARD OF REGENTS' POLICIES

4.1.5 Students with Disabilities

IX. LINKS

<https://caa.columbusstate.edu/>