

Frequently Asked:

Overview

HOW ARE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IDENTIFIED?

It is the responsibility of the student to inform the Access Office of any disability in order to receive accommodations. All students receive a Voluntary Disclosure of Disability form in their letter of acceptance to the university for this purpose. It is also the student's responsibility to provide appropriate, current documentation that specifically justifies any accommodation requested. Students may choose not to identify themselves as having a disability to the institution or individual faculty members. However, accommodations are not provided retroactively in the event that a student discloses the need for accommodations at a later date.

WHAT TYPE OF DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED?

The University System Board of Regents' policy specifies criteria for the documentation of Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder. Other types of disabilities are generally documented by an appropriate medical professional. If the documentation is inadequate as determined by the Access Office, the student will not qualify for accommodations. For disabilities of a changing nature, students may be required to provide updated documentation at a later date.

WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES?

Students are required to identify and document the disability and request accommodations in a timely manner. Students must meet all academic and non-academic criteria for admission to VSU or to the South Georgia College Entry Program. If students are requesting a Foreign Language College Preparatory Curriculum Substitution, they must submit documentation for approval by the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders six months prior to application for admission.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY?

The Access Office staff assists faculty members in making academic modifications that are reasonable and justified by the student's documentation.

WHAT ARE THE INSTITUTION'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

The institution is required to inform students of the availability of services. Institutions are not required to lower standards or waive requirements that can be shown to be essential to the program of study. Institutions are not responsible for providing personal care.

The Access Office for Students with Disabilities (Access Office) serves students who have documented disabilities, have met all of the VSU admission criteria, and are otherwise qualified. The program is responsible for coordination of services for students with disabilities. The primary objectives are to provide equal access to campus programs and activities for all students while upholding the academic standards of Valdosta State University. All services are provided at no charge.

Students who register with the program and their documentation must meet Board of Regents' criteria. The types of disabilities served include learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, visual, hearing, mobility, psychiatric, and other health impairments.

Two pieces of federal legislation directly influence the Access Office. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that "no otherwise qualified disabled individual can be denied access to, or participation in any federally funded activity or program solely on the basis of disability." In addition, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law 101-506, was signed in July 1990. This law extends the prohibition against discrimination on the basis of disability in Section 504 to all programs, activities, and services provided or made available by state and local government, regardless of whether those entities receive federal financial assistance. The law requires accommodations to be reasonable and timely.

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**ACCESS
OFFICE**
For
Students with Disabilities

Staff

Access Office **Services:**

Additional Services



Kimberly Tanner
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Jessica Klotz
Administrative Secretary

Erin Salmon
Coordinator for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services

Michael McKinley
Assistive Technology Coordinator

Lacey Phillips, Graduate Assistant
Educational Leadership in Higher Education

Megan Geiger, Graduate Assistant
Speech/Language Pathology

Abbey Mayfield, Student Assistant
Speech/Language Pathology

Sam Rodgers, Student Assistant
Middle Grades Education

Carla McKibben, Student Assistant



FACULTY LIAISON

The Access Office will assist students in requesting modifications from faculty. The Access Office staff prepares Accommodation Letters that verify documentation of disability and outline necessary modifications. These letters are hand delivered to professors by the student.

ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY/ ALTERNATE MEDIA SERVICES

The Access Office offers students access to adaptive technology including speech recognition software, screen magnification software, text-to speech software, computerized note taking, Sorenson Video Phone, Braille embosser, Type & Speak, and Thermo Pen. The office also coordinates requests for materials in alternate formats including Braille, audio and digital formats, and transcripts of audiovisual materials.

CLASSROOM TESTING MODIFICATIONS

With appropriate documentation, students may be eligible for accommodations such as the use of a computer/word processor, extended testing time, private testing space, reader, or scribe.

SYSTEM TESTING MODIFICATIONS

Registered students can request testing modifications and receive individual assistance in preparing for both the Regents' Testing Program and the COMPASS. Documentation must be reviewed and approved by the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders for system accommodations.

CAMPUS ACCESSIBILITY

The Access Office will assist students with any accessibility issues they may have regarding services and activities on campus.

ACCOMMODATION LETTERS

When students request reasonable classroom or testing modifications that are supported by appropriate documentation, the Access Office staff produces an accommodation letter for each course. These letters are hand-delivered by the student to the faculty for signing. An original copy of this signed letter will be housed at the Access Office. Faculty may wish to negotiate alternate accommodations based on course requirements or content in order to maintain the basic goals of the course.

TESTING SPACE

The Access Office testing lab is available for faculty members who are unable to provide extended time, reduced distraction environments, or other testing modifications at the time of testing.

TRAINING

The Access Office is available to conduct training on a variety of disability-related issues. Topics include sensitivity training, legal responsibilities, and policies and procedures. In addition we are willing to create training materials to meet individual needs of departments, schools, or other organizations.