

Disability Support Services Handbook



Southern Union State Community College Disability Support Services Procedures for Students

Updated March 25, 2025

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Southern Union State Community College complies with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. In an effort to provide these services to our students, each campus has established an Office of Accessibility with an ADA Coordinator to assist students with documented disabilities students.

The Office of Accessibility can be found on each of Southern Union's three campuses. Each office works in partnership with students, faculty, and staff to provide a physically and educationally accessible college environment that ensures an individual is viewed on the basis of ability, not disability. Each ADA Coordinator works individually with students to determine appropriate accommodations that enable all students to have access to the same programs and services. Information about each Office of Accessibility at Southern Union State Community College:

Opelika Campus and Online Students

Joseph Halsey, Student Success and ADA Coordinator
Business & Technology Center Student Success Center, Room 110
301 Lake Condry Road
Opelika, AL 36801
Phone: 334-745-6437, Ext. 5354
Email: jhalsey@suscc.edu

Valley Campus

Robin Brown, Associate Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and ADA Coordinator
John R. Carmichael Building
321 Fob James Drive
Valley, AL 36854
Phone: 334-756-4151, Ext. 5204
Email: rbrown@suscc.edu

Wadley Campus

Tiffanie Character, Academic Advisor and ADA Coordinator
Administration Building, Suite 211
750 Roberts Street
Wadley, AL 36276
Phone: 256-395-2111, Ext. 5154
Email: tcharacter@suscc.edu

SOUTHERN UNION STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE complies with non-discriminatory regulations under Title VI, Title VII, and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX Educational Amendment of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Inquiries concerning this policy may be directed to the ADA Coordinator in the Student Affairs Division. Grievance Procedure Forms are available in the Executive Assistant to the President's office. Southern Union State Community College is an equal employment/equal educational opportunity institution.



INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

The Office of Accessibility welcomes you to Southern Union State Community College. The purpose of this office is to facilitate reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations to college students with documented disabilities. The information in this handbook is designed to help you get started should you wish to request academic accommodations as an undergraduate student at Southern Union State Community College.

Registration with the Office of Accessibility

Registration with the Office of Accessibility is a separate process from applying or admission to Southern Union State Community College. Interested students should contact the ADA Coordinator on the campus he/she will be attending or review the Accessibility Services web page for more information: <https://www.suscc.edu/students/accessibility-services>.

The ADA Coordinators on each campus are the central points-of-contact for students with documented disabilities. Services for students with documented disabilities focus on providing individualized accommodations while promoting students responsibility and self-advocacy. Each ADA Coordinator views the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities as a collaborative effort, requiring the cooperation of faculty, staff, and students.

It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations and to provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Accessibility; however, students who choose not to self-identify when they enter Southern Union do not forfeit their right to receive accommodations at a later date. Additionally, Southern Union is not obligated to provide accommodations or services for students with documented disabilities until they are registered with the Office of Accessibility and make known their need for accommodations each academic term. Accommodations only start at the point forward and are not considered retroactive.

Documentation of Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities who are seeking services from Southern Union State Community College are required to submit documentation to the Office of Accessibility at the campus the student will be attending. This documentation is necessary for the verification for eligibility of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans with Disability Act.

The documentation must specify a major life activity (such as walking, eating, writing, or learning) that has been substantially limited by a disability. The following guidelines ensure that documentation of disabilities is appropriate to verify eligibility and to support requests for accommodations. These guidelines correspond with federal guidelines, Alabama Community College System guidelines and Southern Union State Community College policies.

Confidentiality of Disability Documents

The Office of Accessibility (OA) is the only party that will review disability supporting documents. OA will not release disability documentation to any party without the student's consent. Strict confidentiality is maintained in all verbal communications with Southern Union State Community College faculty and staff unless a student grants written permission or OA is required to do so by law or court order.

Temporary Injuries and/or Illnesses

Students with temporary injuries and/or illnesses are ineligible for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990. Examples include, but are not limited to ankle sprains, colds, and the flu. Students who have a doctor's excuse for absences or injuries which would be considered temporary should provide that doctor's medical excuse to their instructor for consideration of provisions in the classroom.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES

The Office of Accessibility may recommend the following accommodations and services. OA recommends specific accommodations based upon documentation received and individual class requirements. The following examples of common accommodation requests may not be appropriate in all situations. Furthermore, these examples are not an exhaustive listing of all possible accommodations that may be implemented in the classroom setting.

Testing Accommodations – Testing accommodations may include extended time, reduced- distraction testing situations, taped or rally administered tests, readers, and/or scribes. Testing accommodations are provided within each department, if possible. Students should discuss testing accommodations with their instructors at the beginning of each term. The Assessment Center proctors examinations for students who need to use assistive technology or whose instructor is unable to provide test proctoring. Students are obligated to comply with the Assessment Center's proctoring guidelines to ensure smooth delivery of services and to maintain integrity of faculty examinations.

Alternative Formats for Assignments – In some cases, assignments may be submitted in formats other than those stated in course requirements.

Audio Recording and/or Note Takers – Students may be permitted to audio record class lectures and/or may request peer note takers. will assist in providing use of college printers and/or arranging for peer note takers.

Academic Classroom Aids – In many cases, students may be permitted to use calculators, dictionaries, word processing software, spell checkers, and/or grammar checkers for in-class and out-of-class work.



Calculator Use – The use of a basic 4-function calculator for math or science tests and/or assignments may be considered a reasonable accommodation when basic calculations (i.e. addition, subtraction, multiplication, and/or division, and calculations involving integers or decimals) are not being assessed.

Assistive Technology – Southern Union provides assistive technology like note-taking software ((i.e. Glean), C-Reader pens, Livescribe pen, and FM amplifier.

Academic Assistance – Academic assistance may be provided through tutors, note takers, scribes, readers, assistive technology, and /or sign language interpreters. However, federal law does not require Southern Union to provide service that places an undue administrative or financial burden upon the college. The college is not required to provide services of a personal nature, including assistance with eating, using the restroom facilities, or mobility.

Course Substitutions and Adaptions – Course substitutions are an option for students with disabilities who are inhibited from continuing their degree because of a required course in a curriculum. The substitution change in a curriculum and the course to be substituted is done on an individual case. The Dean of Instruction will determine if any substitutions and adaptions are to be made.

Services of a Personal Nature

Services of a personal nature are not considered accommodations in post-secondary education. Examples of personal services include but are not limited to tutoring, attendant care, transportation assistance, and mobility.

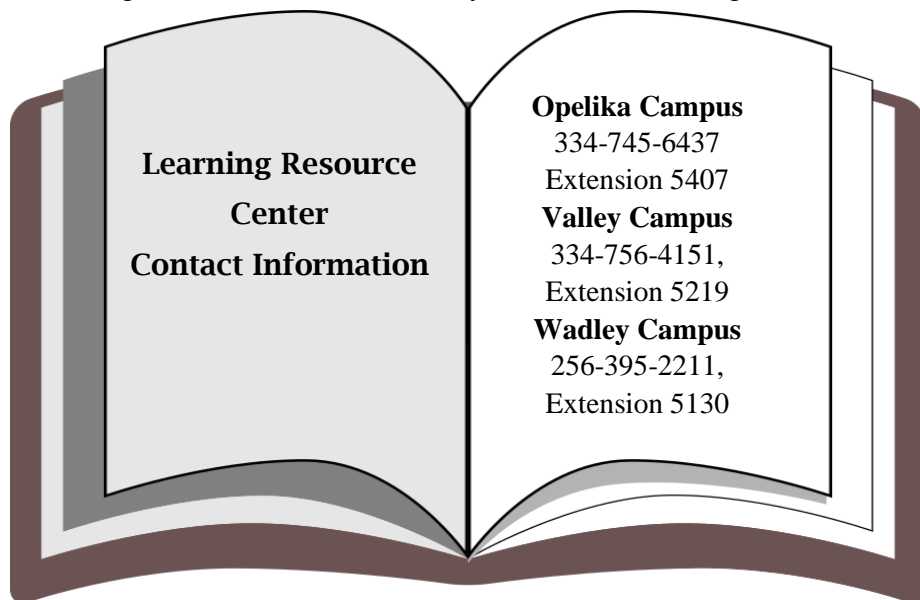
Parking

Accessible parking areas are available to students who are certified for disability parking by their home state. Students who use the handicapped parking spaces must validate their parking permit or be subject to a parking violation and/or having their vehicle towed. For more information on purchase a parking decal, please visit the following webpage: <https://www.suscc.edu/students/parking-driving-regs>. Please follow these steps to obtain the validated handicap parking decal:

1. Purchase a parking decal using the following web page: <https://portal.permitsales.net/driverportal/SUSCC/>.
2. Upon receipt of the decal in the mail, you must have your decal validated by a campus police office. Documentation needed for validation:
 - a. **Tag receipt:** if your name is on the state-issues hang tag documentation.
 - b. **Handicap Parking Privilege Form**—if your name is not on the state-issued hang tag documentation.
3. For temporary parking requests, documentation from a medical professional or current vehicle registration documentation which identifies the student and verifies the need to handicap parking should be sufficient.

Library/Learning Resource Center Access

Learning Resource Center staff may be contacted during business hours to ensure access to library collections and services.



Services include research assistance, retrieval of materials, photocopying assistance, library orientation and special check-out arrangement. Screen reading software is available on accessible computers. Students may request, as a reasonable accommodation, additional accessible hardware/software by contacting the appropriate campus ADA Coordinator.

Academic Support Services

Tutoring services are available to all Southern Union students and therefore are not considered an accommodation. Students in need of additional academic support are encouraged to visit the Student Success Center in the Business & Technology Center (Room 110) or visit the Student Success Center's webpage for more information about services available: <https://www.suscc.edu/students/success-center-overview>.

Animals on Campus

Service Animals – In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are permitted on college campuses and in its facilities. A service animal is defined as an animal who is trained to work or to perform tasks for the benefits of an individual with a disability, including psychiatric, intellectual, physical, sensory, or other mental disability. Please review our [Service Animal Policy](#).

Emotional Support Animal – Emotional (or Comfort) support animals are not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and as such, are not permitted on Southern Union's campuses or its facilities.



How Reasonable Accommodations are Determined

An academic accommodation is essentially a problem-solving process. The task is to determine the necessary adjustments that will enable students with disabilities to have the same programs and services available to students without disabilities, and to have their academic performance evaluated without the limiting effects of their disability. The objective of such adjustments is to accommodate the functional limitations of the student's disability while maintaining the integrity of the college courses and programs. The OA determines reasonable academic adjustments for students, taking into consideration recommendations from the physician, psychologist, or other clinician that diagnosed the student's disability. The OA also ascertains accommodations that previously have been used in educational settings with the student, and gives consideration to the student's preferences for accommodations. In addition, the ADA Coordinator consults with faculty to assist with developing reasonable accommodations for individual course requirements. The ADA Coordinator meets individually with students to discuss accommodations. Although some persons may have similar disabilities, each request for accommodations is considered on a case-by-case basis. Accommodations provided will depend upon:

- a. Nature and type of disability
- b. Requirements of course or activity
- c. Skills and functional limitations of the student

Requests for accommodations must be made each term of enrollment and once a determination is made to provide accommodations, students are responsible for meeting with their instructors to discuss their accommodations with each instructor. Additionally, in making reasonable accommodations, an educational institution is not obligated to waive or modify program requirements to lower academic requirements which are reasonable and nondiscriminatory. Furthermore, accommodations are not retroactive. Faculty members are not obligated to accommodate prior exams, assignments, or any course-related activity that occurred prior to receiving an accommodations packet from the ADA Coordinator.

Criteria for Disability Documentation

Learning Disabilities (LD)

The following professionals are generally considered qualified to diagnose learning disabilities: clinical psychologists, school psychologists, psychologists, learning disability specialists, diagnosticians, or psychiatrists.

A school plan such as an IEP or a 504 Accommodation Plan may not provide insufficient information concerning the diagnosis of a disability, but may be included as part of a more comprehensive report.

1. Clear statement of presenting problem; diagnostic interview
2. Relevant test data with standard scores which support conclusions of the measures of intellectual/cognitive/information processing abilities using at least one of the following assessment instruments, including at least: (1) Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised, including Written Language; (2) WAIS-R Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Processing Battery to substantiate any processing problems; (3) Stanford-Binet IV; (4) Peabody Individual Achievement Test; (5) Stanford Test of Academic Skills

3. Clearly stated diagnosis of a specific learning disability in reading, math, or written language based on DSM-V Criteria
4. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations, support by evaluation data
5. Current letter/report (within 3 years), dated and signed

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

The following professionals are generally considered qualified to evaluate ADD/ADHD: licensed educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, neurologists, and psychiatrists. A comprehensive evaluation report should substantiate the need for services based on the student's current level of function. The following should be included in the report:

1. Clear statement of presenting problem; diagnostic interview
2. Evidence of early and current impairment in at least two different environments (comprehensive history)
3. Alternative explanations and diagnosis ruled out
4. Relevant test data with standard scores which support conclusions, including at least: (a) Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Batter-Revised, including Written Language; (b) WAIS-R; (c) Woodcock-Johnson cognitive Processing Battery to substantiate any processing problems
5. Clearly stated diagnosis of a Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) based on DSM-V
6. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations, support by evaluation data

A High School IEP, 504 Plan, and/or a letter from a physician or other professional may also be taken into consideration when evaluating eligibility to receive accommodations for an ADD or ADHD diagnosis.

Health Condition, Mobility, Hearing, Speech or Visual Impairment

The following professionals are generally considered qualified to evaluate mobility, sensory and systemic disorders: physicians, orthopedic specialists, audiologists, speech pathologists, or ophthalmologists.

1. A clearly stated clinical diagnosis
2. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations
3. Current treatment and medication
4. Current letter/report (within 1 year) dated and signed



Psychological Disorders

The following professionals are considered qualified to evaluate psychological disorders: clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, licensed professional counselors, or clinical social workers.

Evaluations should be no more than one year old. Changes may have occurred in the student's performance since a previous diagnosis, or new medication may have been prescribed or discontinued since the initial diagnosis was made. Documentation should substantiate the need for services based on the student's current function. The following should be included in the report:

1. A clearly stated clinical diagnosis
2. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations
3. Current treatment and medication
4. Assessment and evaluation instruments used, observations, history, etc.
5. Current letter (within 1 year), signed and dated

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

The following professionals are considered qualified to evaluate Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): Rehabilitation counselors, speech-language pathologists, orthopedic specialists, neuropsychologists, and any other specialists as appropriate who have expertise in evaluating the impact of TBI on an individual's educational performance. Documentation should substantiate the need for services based on the student's current functioning. The following should be included in the report.

1. Assessment of cognitive abilities, including processing speed and memory
2. Analysis of educational achievement skills and limitations (reading comprehension, written language, spelling, and mathematical abilities)
3. Defined levels of functioning and limitations in all affected areas (communication, vision, hearing, mobility, psychological, seizures)
4. Current treatment and medication
5. Current letter/report (post-rehabilitation and within one (1) year, dated and signed).

Temporary Injuries and/or Illness

Students with some temporary injuries and/or illness are may be eligible for service under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Speak with the ADA Coordinator on the campus where you attend classes for more information. Some temporary injuries like ankle sprains, colds, and the flu are not eligible under the ADA.

THE ACCOMMODATION PROCESS

Students who have a documented disability are eligible to register for services with the Office of Accessibility. Disabilities may involve physical or mobility impairments, vision or hearing impairments, learning disabilities, a psychological diagnosis or any other relevant diagnosed condition.

It is the student's responsibility to provide proper documentation and to request accommodations each term. Registered students may request accommodations at any point during the term; however, students that do not give sufficient notice of accommodation requests are not guaranteed that optimal accommodations will be implemented. Students have an obligation to inform Southern Union State Community College in a timely manner of their accommodation request.

Registration Steps

1. Complete a "Request for Accommodations" online at the Southern Union website on the Accessibility Services page. Medical documentation of the student's disability will also be attached to this form.
2. Schedule a meeting with the ADA Coordinator on the campus where the student plans to attend for a consultation on the student's needs and how best we will be able to serve the student. Students can also review the requirements for proper documentation by looking at the "ADA Criteria for Disability Documentation" form found on the Accessibility Services page as well.
3. The ADA Coordinator will make a determination of the accommodations needed and will complete an Accommodations Letter for the instructor of the course for which the accommodations are requested.
4. Once the student receives the Accommodations Letter, it is their responsibility to meet with their instructor to discuss how accommodations will be implemented for the course.
5. Report any problems with accommodations with your ADA Coordinator.

Students are required to deliver and discuss Accommodation Letters with faculty before accommodations will be implemented. **Accommodations are not retroactive.** Faculty are not obligated to accommodate prior exams or assignments before an Accommodation Letter is delivered and discussed.

Evaluating Accommodation Requests

Students with documented disabilities who are seeking academic accommodations from Southern Union are required to submit documentation verifying their eligibility to receive services under Section 504 or the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.



In compliance with state and federal regulations, Southern Union has established guidelines for documentation to ensure that the documentation contains necessary information to assist in the process of determining eligibility for accommodations. Please review the [Criteria for Disability Documentation](#). Documentation must verify the nature and extent of the disability in accordance with current professional standards and techniques and it must clearly address the need for all the student's specific accommodation request based on the student's current level of function in the education setting.

It is not uncommon for evaluators to recommend a range of accommodations and services for a student, however, these are recommendations and not a guarantee of what will be provided for the student by our institution. The ADA Coordinator will meet with the student to help determine which accommodations would be both reasonable and beneficial to the student under the law. An unreasonable accommodations may provide an unfair advantage to the student or "substantially modify a program's standards."

A postsecondary institution has the discretion to require additional documentation if it is determined that the existing documentation is incomplete, out-of-date, or inadequate to determine the existence of a disability or a current need for accommodations. For example, Individualized Education Program (IEP), a Summary of Performance (SOP) or a Section 504 Plan are useful but may not, in and of themselves, be sufficient documentation to establish the rationale for accommodations. Such plans may be included as part of a more comprehensive assessment battery and used as part of the evaluation process to determine accommodations for a student.

Registration for Transfer/Transient Students with Accommodations from a Previously Attended Institution

Transfer Students with documented disabilities that have received accommodations at another post-secondary institution are not necessarily eligible for services at Southern Union State Community College. To secure services from OA, transfer students with documented disabilities must follow OA registration steps outlined in this manual:

Requesting Disability Documentation

1. Complete this request form "[https://suscc.my.salesforce-sites.com/inquiry/TargetX_Base_InquiryForm?formId=a\)b5f00000HawJsEAJ&formType=general](https://suscc.my.salesforce-sites.com/inquiry/TargetX_Base_InquiryForm?formId=a)b5f00000HawJsEAJ&formType=general)" online at the Southern Union website on the Accessibility Services page. Medical documentation of the student's disability will also be attached to this form.
2. Schedule a meeting with the ADA Coordinator on the campus where the student plans to attend for a consultation on the student's needs and how best to serve the student. Students can also review the requirements for proper documentation by looking at the "ADA Criteria for Disability Documentation" form found on the Accessibility/ADA page as well.
3. Students can contact their previous school and request information be sent to OA via email. Typically, students are required to sign a release of information before any documents are forwarded to OA.

Requesting Verification of Academic Accommodations

1. Request the institution that provided academic accommodations to verify in writing the types of accommodations granted. Typically, the student will have to sign a release of information before verification is forward to OA.
2. ADA Coordinator will make a determination of the Accommodations needed and will complete an Accommodations Letter for the instructor of the course or courses for which the accommodations are requested. This may take up to 48 hours.
3. Once the student receives the Accommodations Letter, it is their responsibility to meet with their instructor to discuss how accommodations will be implemented for the course.
4. Remind instructor of exam accommodations at least one week before scheduled exams. This will allow the instructor the opportunity to make alternative arrangements if those are needed.
5. Report any problems with accommodations with your ADA Coordinator.

Common Points of Confusion

1. *Who requests disability verification from the former institution?* The student is responsible for ensuring disability verification is sent to the OA. Staff at the OA do not request information from other institutions.
2. Admissions decision are made without consideration of disability status. Do not send disability verification to the Admissions Office.
3. Your previous high school does not forward a copy of your 504 or IEP to the OA.



504/Grievance Process for Students

Questions and concerns regarding accommodations and services for students with disabilities should be directed initially to the ADA Coordinator on the campus where the student attends. If the ADA Coordinator along with the student cannot resolve the issue, a meeting with the student, the faculty member, and the Dean of Student Affairs is the second step in resolving the disagreement. If an agreement concerning disability rights is not reached at this point, the final step in the grievance process involved the dissenting party filing a formal grievance.

The process for filing an official grievance is located in the Southern Union State Community Student Handbook and Catalog. Hard copies of the Student Handbook and Catalog can be found in the library or in any of the dean's offices. Student may also visit the Southern Union State Community College web page (www.suscc.edu) and under the **Current Students** menu options, click "*Student Handbook & Catalog.*"

Should the student disagree with the outcome of the grievance Process, you may file a formal complaint with the Office for Civil Rights:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, Suite 16T70
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909
Customer Response Center: (800) 368-1019
Fax: (202) 619-3818
TDD: (800) 537-7697
Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICIES

The following policies apply to OA operations. Registered students should be familiar with those policies that apply to their particular requests. OA may change, alter, or modify these policies. Students will be notified via college email if there are any changes made to the policy.

Recording Policy

Students that who are eligible to record class lectures must agree to the following terms in order for OA to request this accommodation and they also must abide by the policy of audiotape recordings lectures as established by OA.

Students must agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. Do not copy or share audio recordings from any of classes with other students.
2. Do not copy or share audio recordings with non-students.
3. Do not divulge the contents of audio recordings from any classes with agencies, representatives of organizations, the media or any entity other than yourself.
4. Upon completion of the academic term, erase audio recordings from all classes that were recorded.

Non-compliance with terms and conditions for audio recordings of lectures may result in a charge of academic misconduct.

Excused Absence Policy

Students should sign and keep a copy of this statement for reference following a disability-related absence. Students that have an accommodation for excused absences should keep in mind that only disability-related absences are eligible to be excused. Students that are absent frequently or for long periods may not be eligible to receive excused absences, but may be able to take an incomplete in the course.

Any student who is eligible for the academic accommodation of excused absences is responsible for the following in the event such student is absent from class because of a disability-related issues:

1. At your earliest convenience, inform your instructor of an absence due to a disability-related issues. OA recommends emailing the instructor and saving the message as a record of this communication with the instructor. If emailing is not an option to notify the instructor of an absence, notification via telephone is also a viable option. It is imperative that the instructor is aware of your absence as soon as possible.
2. Students are responsible for any work or exams missed due to an absence. Students will need to make arrangements with the instructor to complete missed assignments and/or exams in a timely manner.



Sign Language Interpreter Policy

The Goal of DSS in Interpreting Services

The goal of the Office of Accessibility in the area of interpreting services is to facilitate the process of providing high quality interpreting services to deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing clients. DSS will service in a mediator capacity to assure appropriate accommodations are provided to deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) students as mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Interpreter's Role

An interpreter is a professional communication facilitator between D/HH individuals and hearing individuals. The purpose of an interpreter is to provide a meaningful communication exchange equal to that of a hearing individual. The interpreter uses a specific sign language to communicate the spoken word to D/HH clients. Interpreters will use their voices to communicate sign language to hearing clients. Some D/HH individuals, however; prefer to voice for themselves. The interpreter is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the environment is appropriate and conducive for interpreting.

The interpreter is not a tutor, instructor, note-taker or counselor and should not engage in these roles.

Requesting an Interpreter

It is critical that D/HH students notify OA of their communication needs and preferences as early as possible to ensure appropriate accommodations. If the student is a client of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the student will need to contact their vocational rehabilitation counselor for services. **Requests for interpreter services must be submitted three weeks prior to the beginning of the term.** DSS will require a copy of the student's schedule and a completed Interpreter Request Form. Forms are available in OA, online (www.suscc.edu) or via email.

Students should inform OA of any class scheduling changes (i.e. adding or dropping a class, room change, day/time change).

Students who experience problems with interpreting services should attempt to address their concerns with the interpreter and/or instructor. If no resolution can be reached, the student should contact OA as soon as possible.

Note Taking Services Policy

Note takers are provided to students that have a visible need for note taking services or have documentation that substantiates a need for note taker services. Instructors assist with locating note taking and the entire process is handled through the instructor to maintain anonymity of the requester.

Reader Services Policy

Readers are offered to students who are eligible for reader services. One week's prior notice is required for reader services. Material may be read by using assistive technology or a live reader when assistive technology is not available. Eligible students should notify OA at least one week in advance if live reader services are needed.

Role of a reader: The purpose of a reader is to provide access to print materials. Readers are not available to offer interpretations or explanations for documents read. Students should con-sult their professor for clarifications.

Exam Proctoring Policy

Students who wish to take exams in the Assessment Center must contact the Assessment Cen-ter staff to schedule their test in advance and notify the instructor of their desire to have their exam proctored. The instructor is responsible for providing the exam to Assessment Center prior to testing along with the approved accommodations for the students. Students may not transport their own exams. Instructors will access the request for accommodated testing form through their Ellucian Experience account.

1. It is the student's responsibility to inform their instructor about the request to test in the Assessment Center. It is not the responsibility of the Assessment Center staff to ensure timely delivery of the student's exam.
2. Instructors are required to complete the request form found on Ellucian Experience to submit with their student's exam. This will specify testing accommodations as well as outline directions for the administration of the exam.
3. The Assessment Center cannot grant extensions for an exam completion beyond re-quested accommodations. Students should consult with their instructor regarding ex-tensions.
4. The Assessment Center cannot provide additional accommodations beyond what is specified by the instructor. Students should consult with their instructor regarding ad-ditional accommodations outside of what has been identified on their request form.
5. The instructor will establish exam parameters such as the day and time students are to take exams; however, flexibility may be necessary when there are scheduling requests conflict with availability.
6. Students will not be allowed to leave the testing area for any reason once an exam has begun unless such student is eligible for an accommodation that allows for movement or a restroom break.

Students are not allowed to consult with tutors or office personnel about exam questions. To do so constitutes academic misconduct. Any questions should be directed to the instructor.

Service Animal Policy

Service animals have become a part of life for many people living with disabilities. Service animals can be trained to perform a variety of tasks to assist people with disabilities and to enable their handlers the opportunity to fully participate in everyday life activities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local government agencies, business, and non-profit organizations that provides goods or services to the public to make “reasonable modifications” in their policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to accommodate people with disabilities. Rules for service animal fall under this general principal. According to the Campus Pet Policy, pets are not allowed inside college buildings, including students housing; however, this does not apply to individual accompanied by “seeing-eye dogs or other trained, assisting animals.”

What is considered a service animal?

Under ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The tasks performed by the dog must be directed related to the person’s disability. In other words, the dog must be trained to handle a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. For example, a person with epilepsy may have a dog that is trained to detect the onset of a seizure and then help the person remain safe during the seizure.

A separate provision has been added to include miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities as service animals. Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds.



Federal regulations outline four assessment factors to assist entities in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated at their facility.

What is not considered a service animal under the ADA?

Animals for emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are not qualified as service animals under the ADA because they have not been trained to perform a specific job or task.

Identifying a Service Animal

Although not required by the ADA, some service animals wear a patch, vest or special harness identifying them as service animals. Not all service animals are identified as a service animal. Students who are eligible to receive the accommodation of a service animal are encouraged to register with OA.

Important Reminders

1. The service animals handler is responsible for the care and supervision their service animal.
2. According to the Alabama State law, dogs (including service dogs) must have current vaccinations. (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 3-7A-2)
3. The ADA requires that service animals be under the control of their handler at all times.
4. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of these devices. In that case, the person must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the animal.
5. Under control means that a service animal should not be allowed to bark repeatedly in a lecture hall, theater, library, or other quiet place. However, if a dog barks just once, or barks because someone has provoked it, this would not mean that the dog is out of control.
6. If a service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control, staff may request that the animal be removed from the premises.
7. Any person who is found to be in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action from college officials.

Please review the Southern Union State Community College handbook for more information about the Campus Pet Policy.

For more information about the service animal policy established by the ADA:

Visit their website: www.ADA.gov

Call their toll-free number: 800-514-0301 (Voice) or 800-514-0383 (TTY)

Policy for Review of Personal Records by Students

According to federal law as outlined by the Family Education and Privacy Act (FERPA), students have the right to review their academic records.

1. Students that wish to see their file should make a request to the OA.
2. A request to review a file will be honored within 45 days, the period specified by FERPA. Typically, OA staff will be able to schedule a review session within 10 days.
3. An appropriate OA staff member will be present when a student reviews his/her file. Any questions regarding disability documentation will be answered to the best of the staff member's ability. Students are encouraged to contact the author of their disability documentation to discuss questions, comments, or concerns.

Students are not allowed to photo-copy the contents of their file; however, students are allowed to make notations.



ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

The important issue for potential and current college students with disabilities is to understand the difference between the applications of disability rights laws in secondary and post-secondary institutions. The most basic distinction between services for students with disabilities in high school and college is secondary settings are geared towards least restrictive settings whereas post-secondary institutions are obliged to provide access. In other words, more responsibility is placed on student initiative in higher education.

There are key differences in the laws that establish the obligations of pre and post-secondary institutions to support students with disabilities. Under the ADA and its amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, students at the post-secondary level must meet the established entrance, course, and graduation requirements with or without reasonable accommodations. Students who wish to receive academic accommodations on the post-secondary level are required to request them in advance and to provide acceptable documentation of their disability to the institution. In contrast, all students in the K-12 system have access to a free, appropriate education in an “integrated” setting with their non-disabled classmates.

LEGAL	
HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Services provided under IDEA or Section 504 School district responsible for identifying and evaluating disability at no cost to student or family.	Services provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Student must self-identify and provide documentation of disability. Student must pay cost of evaluation. College is responsible for costs involved in providing accommodations and/or essential auxiliary aids student needs based on documentation of disability.
ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT	
HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Special education teacher is the liaison and buffer between student, other teachers, administrators, and parents. The decision to receive accommodations is made by educators and parents. Students have little or no choice.	Student is responsible for self-advocacy. Student can choose not to seek services and accommodations and can choose to function independently. Student must self-identify disability and request services from college. Student required to provide recent documentation of disability.
Help is readily available.	Student must independently seek help using effective communication skills. Services must be requested in advanced (i.e. you cannot wait until the day of a test to ask for accommodations).
Student is “labeled” as a special education student. Student is possibly serviced separately from the other students.	Students not “labeled” or served separately from other students. Other students and faculty will not know about student’s disability. Faculty only notified of required accommodations.
Personnel talk freely with parents about student’s progress and planning.	Personnel cannot discuss student's information without student’s written permission.

Notes

ADA Authorization for Release of Information

This form is used by students are transferring to another institution and would like to receive accommodations at the receiving.

ADA Authorization for Release of Information

Name: _____ Student Number: _____

Address: _____
Contact Number: _____

Email: _____ Birth Date: _____

Release of Information:

This authorization applies to the following information:

- _____ Supporting medical documentation
- _____ Accommodations currently provided

The information may be released to:

Individual/Agency/Organization Receiving Information

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Phone

Email

Purpose:

The student's information will be released for the following purpose(s):

This authorization is valid from the date of signature and will remain in effective until the student is no longer enrolled at Southern Union State Community College or the student revokes consent.

I understand that I may revoke this authorization at any time in writing sent to the ADA Coordinator.

Student Printed Name

Student Signature

Date:



CRITERIA FOR DISABILITY DOCUMENTATION

Southern Union State Community College does not provide disability documentation for students. It is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate documentation to this office and to request accommodations. Appropriate documentation is being defined as that which meets the following criteria:

Health Condition, Mobility, Hearing, Speech, or Visual Impairment

A letter or report from treating physician, orthopedic specialist, audiologist, speech pathologist, or ophthalmologist (as appropriate), including...

1. Clearly stated diagnosis
2. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations
3. Current treatment and medication
4. Current letter/report (within 1 year); dated and signed

Psychological Disorder

A letter or report from a mental health professional (psychologist, neuropsychologist, licensed professional counselor), including:

1. Clearly stated diagnosis (DSM-V criteria)
2. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations
3. Supporting documentation (i.e. test data, history, observations, etc.)
4. Current treatment and medication
5. Current letter/report (within 1 year) dated and signed

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

A comprehensive evaluation report by a rehabilitation counselor, speech-language pathologist, orthopedic specialist, and/or neuropsychologist (or other specialists as appropriate) including:

1. Assessment of cognitive abilities, including processing speed and memory.
2. Analysis of educational achievement skills and limitations (reading comprehension, written language, spelling, and mathematical abilities)
3. Defined levels of functioning and limitations in all affected areas (communication, vision, hearing, mobility, psychological, seizures, etc.)
4. Current treatment and medication
5. Current letter/report (post-rehabilitation and within one year) dated and signed

Learning Disabilities (LD)

1. A comprehensive evaluation report from a clinical psychologist, psychiatrist, neuropsychologist, school psychologist, learning disability specialist or diagnostician including:
2. Clear statement of presenting problem, diagnostic interview
3. Educational history documenting the impact of the learning disability
4. Alternative explanations and diagnoses are ruled out
5. Relevant test data with standard scores are provided to support conclusions, including at least:
 - WAIS-II or III
 - Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery, including Written Language
 - Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Processing Battery to substantiate any processing problems
 - Behavioral Assessment Instruments and Checklists normed on adults
6. Clearly stated diagnosis or a learning disability based upon DMS-V criteria
7. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations, supported by evaluation data
8. Current report within three years dated and signed

Note: High School IEP, 504 Plan, and/or a letter from a physician or other professional may also be taken into consideration when evaluating eligibility to receive accommodations for a learning disability diagnosis but may not contain sufficient information to document request for accommodations.

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

1. A comprehensive evaluation report from a physician, psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, neurologist, or neuropsychologist, including:
2. A clear statement of presenting problem; diagnostic interview
3. Evidence of early and current impairment in at least two different environments (comprehensive history)
4. Alternative explanations and diagnosis are ruled out
5. Relevant test data with standard scores are provided to support conclusions, including at least:
 - WAIS-II or III
 - Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery, including Written Language
 - Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Processing Battery to substantiate any processing problems
 - Behavioral Assessment Instruments and Checklists normed on adults
6. Clearly stated diagnosis of ADD or ADHD based upon DSM-V criteria
7. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations, supported by evaluation data
8. Current report within three years dated and signed

Note: High School IEP, 504 Plan, and/or a letter from a physician or other professional may also be taken into consideration when evaluating eligibility to receive accommodations for an ADD or ADHD diagnosis, however, it may not contain sufficient information to document the request for accommodations. Medication cannot be used to imply a diagnosis.