



## Office of Disability Services Guidelines

### **Admission:**

Enrollment Services handles all applications for admission to Shelton State Community College. Admission standards are described in the Shelton State catalog and must be met by all students, regardless of disability. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services upon enrollment. Students who need accommodations during testing sessions should contact Testing and Assessment Services at [testing@sheltonstate.edu](mailto:testing@sheltonstate.edu).

### **Academic Requirements:**

Colleges are not required to alter essential academic requirements. Requirements which can be demonstrated as essential to a course or program of study or to any directly related licensing requirement are not regarded as discriminatory. Instructors are not required to make adjustments for students until forms have been received from the Office of Disability Services.

### **Self- Identifying:**

Prospective students are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services ([ODS@sheltonstate.edu](mailto:ODS@sheltonstate.edu)) for information regarding services and facilities. It is best for a student with accommodation needs to self-identify with the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. If special accommodations are needed for placement testing, all documentation should be on file in the Office of Disability Services prior to the exam.

### **Definition:**

A person with a disability is defined by the ADA as an individual who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as caring for oneself, talking, seeing, hearing, reading, thinking and learning); a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. The College is not required to provide services of a personal nature, including assistance with eating, toileting, or mobility.

### **Laws:**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Amendments Act of 2008 state qualified students with disabilities who meet the technical and academic standards at Alabama College System institutions are entitled to reasonable accommodations placed in a regular classroom. Under these laws, a disability is defined as any physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity, a history of such impairment, or the perception of such impairment. The college is NOT covered under the

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA applies to K-12 institutions and requires individualized education plans (IEPs). Students who were eligible for services at the secondary level may not necessarily be eligible for services or accommodations at the postsecondary level as different laws with different definitions apply. Federal Law requires that requests for services for students with disabilities be considered on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### **Documentation:**

Students seeking accommodations and services on the basis of a disability are required to submit documentation to verify their eligibility for services. Sources of information used for determining a disability and/or accommodations may include a student's self-report, direct observation and interaction with the student, in addition to documentation from evaluators or professionals.

Although a student may have a disability, it does not necessarily mean that he or she will require accommodations in order to access his or her education. Current and sufficient documentation should be brought to the initial welcome meeting. Typically, a licensed psychologist, physician, or other appropriate professional provides the evaluation, diagnosis, impact of the disability on the student abilities/limitations, and recommended accommodations in a detailed report.

Alabama College System institutions do NOT provide testing or documentation to determine a disability for students. It is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and to request accommodations. If the documentation is outdated or not sufficient to warrant the accommodations requested, more documentation may be required. The college maintains the right to reject documentation not verifying a student's disability or to delineate reasonable accommodations. The student bears the cost and responsibility of providing this information. Appropriate documentation is defined as meeting the criteria listed with the Office of Disability Services.

Disability documentation should include the following components. It is important to note that some reports may be comprehensive in some components and less so in others. Professional judgment is important in determining if a specific component is adequate. This may depend on the nature of the disability and the type(s) of services and accommodations being requested:

- Summary typed on letterhead, dated, and signed by a qualified professional;
- Specific diagnosis and date;
- Background information (e.g., interview, review of records);
- Evidence of existing impairment;
- Functional limitations or symptoms (Limitations inform which accommodations are appropriate.);
- Relevant testing;
- Recommended accommodations.

Documentation accepted by the Office of Disability Services is valid as long as a student is continuously enrolled at the College. However, if there is a break in the student's enrollment, or a change in requested accommodations, he/she may need to present updated documentation to receive services. Disability-related information received to support requests for accommodations is treated as confidential and shared only on a need-to-know-basis. The information may not be released to an outside third party without the written consent of the individual.

**Continuation of Services:**

Services are not retroactive. A student should register with the ODS to obtain initial contact and get accommodations in place. Students must check in each semester to verify continuation of services. Updated information may be necessary to provide accommodations. A class schedule and a request for accommodations form should be completed before the semester begins or before accommodations can be put into place.

**Accommodation Process:**

Adherence to the following procedures insures the best possible service the institution can provide.

- The student wishing to identify with the ODS office schedules an appointment.
- A member of the ODS meets individually with the student to discuss accommodations.
- The student completes the ODS registration and compliance forms.
- The student should bring a photo ID and a copy of his/her current schedule of classes.
- The ODS determines reasonable academic accommodations for a student, taking into consideration recommendations from the physician, psychologist, or other professional who diagnosed the student's disability. Accommodations previously used in educational settings with the student will be taken into consideration. Although students may have similar diagnoses, each student is treated individually.
- The ODS recommends reasonable accommodations by preparing a letter addressed to the instructor of each class for which the student requests accommodations. The student should hand deliver the forms to the instructors and discuss requested accommodations with the instructors.
- An instructor is not obligated to provide accommodations to a student with a disability until the official ODS accommodation letter from the student is received.
- Testing in the ODS department is a courtesy offered to assist the instructors in providing accommodations. Rules and expectations of all parties will be discussed with the student during the ODS meeting. In addition, it is the student's responsibility to discuss scheduling and details of the requested accommodations with his/her instructors.

## **New Students Establishing Services with the Office of Disability Services:**

1. \_\_\_ Meet all required application steps in order to apply to Shelton State Community College (such as Admissions or Financial Aid).
2. \_\_\_ Complete any necessary placement tests and have the scores reported.
3. \_\_\_ Meet with an Educational Planner or advisor in order to decide which classes to take. Call the Educational Planning Center at 205.391.2232.
4. \_\_\_ Register for your classes and complete payment.
5. \_\_\_ Have your student ID made in the Cashiers Office.
6. \_\_\_ Schedule a Welcome Meeting with the ODS department. Call 205.391.2983
7. \_\_\_ Complete initial *Welcome* meeting with a member of the ODS staff.
  - a. Fill out necessary application forms.
  - b. Turn in documentation of disability for review.
  - c. Discuss any additional information.
8. \_\_\_ Take a copy of your class schedule and student ID to one of the ODS staff.
9. \_\_\_ Complete a *Request for Accommodations* form. (Each semester)
10. \_\_\_ Have accommodation letters completed by an ODS staff member.
11. \_\_\_ Sign and pick up accommodation letters from the ODS staff prior to the start of classes and not later than the first week of each semester.
12. \_\_\_ Hand deliver your purple accommodation letters to your instructors the first week of class.
13. \_\_\_ Discuss your need for accommodations with your instructors.  
Appointment may be necessary.

## **Recommended Documentation Guidelines for Specific Disabilities**

Each disability type has its own documentation guidelines. All documentation must be submitted on the official letterhead of the professional diagnosing the disability. The report should be in narrative form, typed, dated and signed and include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about licensure and certification. Recommendations for accommodations should also be included in the report.

**Health Condition, Mobility, Hearing, Speech, Vision** - A report from a treating professional with a clearly stated diagnosis with defined levels of functioning and any limitations. Also provide documentation of any current treatment and medication with a current letter/report (within 1 year), dated and signed.

**Psychological Disorder** - A letter or report from a mental health professional with a clearly stated diagnosis and defined levels of functioning and any limitations. Also, supporting test data, history and documentation of current treatment and medication (within one year)

**Traumatic Brain Injury** - A comprehensive evaluation report by an appropriate specialist which includes the following information:

1. Assessment of cognitive abilities, including processing speed and memory.
2. Analysis of educational achievement skills and limitations (reading, writing, spelling and math 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, (within one year) dated and signed

**Learning Disability** - A comprehensive evaluation report from a clinical psychologist, psychiatrist, neuropsychologist, school psychologist, learning disability specialist, or diagnostician, including the following:

1. Clear statement of presenting problem; diagnostic interview
2. Educational history documenting the impact of the learning disability
3. Alternative explanations and diagnoses are ruled out
4. Relevant test data with standard scores are provided to support conclusions
5. Clearly stated diagnosis of specific learning disability based upon DSM-V criteria
6. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations, supported by evaluation data
7. Current report (within 3 years of enrollment date) signed and dated

**Attention Deficit Disorder ADD/ADHD** - A comprehensive evaluation report from a physician, psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, neurologist, or neurophysiologist including:

1. Clear statement of presenting problem; diagnostic interview
2. Evidence of early and current impairment in two different environments
3. Alternative explanations and diagnoses are ruled out
4. Relevant test data with standard scores provided to support conclusions
5. Clearly stated diagnosis of ADD or ADHD based upon DSM-V criteria
6. Defined levels of functioning and any limitations, supported by data
7. Current report (within 3 years of enrollment date) dated and signed

PLEASE NOTE – A High School IEP, 504 Plan, and/or a letter from a physician or other professional may not be sufficient to document ADD or ADHD. Medication cannot be used to imply a diagnosis.

Accommodations are not retro-active.

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