A Faculty Guide to Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Shelton State Community College Office Disability Services 2012

Policies, Procedures, and Resources

Shelton State Community College (SSCC) is committed to the achievement of maximum human potential. In keeping with this, the college fully supports and complies with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA 2008). SSCC endeavors to provide students an opportunity for success with as few deterrents as possible. SSCC strives to create a welcoming environment and will work in good faith to meet the needs of all populations.

SSCC provides services and reasonable accommodations pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act and in compliance with the policies established by The Alabama College System. The Alabama College System is committed to working with individuals with disabilities. It is a goal of The Alabama College System to ensure that students with disabilities have the programmatic and architectural accesses needed for integration into campus life.

All applicants must meet the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in programs and/or activities at Alabama College System institutions. Alabama College System institutions will not reduce standards in the grading and/or evaluation of students. Academic requirements that are determined by the respective college to be essential or fundamental will not be modified.

Shelton State Community College (SSCC) policy calls for reasonable accommodations to be made for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. It is the responsibility of students with disabilities, however, to seek available assistance at SSCC and to make their needs known. At SSCC, the Office of the Dean of Students is the designated office that obtains and files disability-related documents, certifies eligibility for services, determines reasonable accommodations, and develops plans for the provision of such accommodations for students with disabilities.

This handbook is designed as a guide to help faculty members, administrators and staff personnel understand their critical role in reasonably accommodating the needs of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities and faculty members both have rights and responsibilities in identifying appropriate accommodations. This booklet serves as a preliminary guide to address common questions about teaching students with disabilities.

Alabama College System Guidelines

The Alabama College System institutions abide by the following guidelines for assisting students with disabilities.

1. Alabama College System institutions are not subject to IDEA. They comply with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act.
2. Alabama College System institutions are not required to seek out and identify disabled students needing reasonable accommodations. STUDENTS MUST SELF-IDENTIFY AND REQUEST ASSISTANCE.

3. Students should furnish adequate documentation of disabilities from medical or other appropriate professionals. Documentation is confidential and will not be released without permission.

4. It is recommended that students needing accommodations provide documentation and requests for accommodation 3-6 weeks in advance of the first term of enrollment.

5. Accommodations provided will depend upon: (1) nature and type of disability; (2) requirements of course or activity; and (3) skills and functional limitations of the student. Alabama College System institutions will not fundamentally alter or modify course or program requirements.

6. Requests for accommodations must be made each term of enrollment.

7. The student should discuss accommodations with each instructor.

The Student with a Disability

Under state and federal regulations (see Appendix A), a person with a disability is identified as anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; a record (or past history) of such an impairment; or being regarded as having a disability. Further, a history of such disability or the belief on the part of others that a person has such a disability, whether it is so or not, is also recognized as a disability by the regulation.

Conditions considered a disability include but are not limited to:

- Alcoholism*
- Cancer
- Cerebral palsy
- Deafness/Hearing Impairment
- Diabetes
- Drug Addiction
- Epilepsy
- Heart Disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Muscular dystrophy
- Mental or emotional illness, including:
  - Eating disorders, depression,
  - Attention deficit disorder
- Orthopedic, speech, or visual impairments
- Perceptual Handicaps: Developmental aphasia, Dyslexia, Minimal brain dysfunction
*Ruled to be physical or mental impairments that are disabling conditions if they limit one or more of life’s major activities.

While some of these conditions are readily identifiable, many are not. Consider the following before you prejudge a student who may qualify for accommodation:

1. Students with disabilities should be provided with the same opportunities as any other students in class, including the right to demonstrate excellence or to fail.

2. If the student with a disability fails your examination, has he or she failed “testing” or failed to learn the subject in which he/she was tested?

**Suggestions for Classroom Accommodations**

**General**

Because each disability may require a different approach to reasonably accommodating the needs of the student with a disability, it might prove beneficial for the instructor to note in the class syllabus or to make an announcement to this effect at the beginning of each semester and to each class:

> “Any student who feels that he or she may need to discuss individual accommodations, please make an appointment to see the Office of Disability Services.”

Such an announcement will help preserve the student’s privacy, indicate a willingness on the part of the faculty member to provide assistance, and permit an early accommodation if one is required. When a student with a disability does request accommodations, faculty may consult with the Office of Disability Services for assistance in providing needed accommodations. Please appreciate that some students with disabilities may be qualified for special support but choose not to seek accommodations.

Your efforts as an instructor need not produce the identical result or level of achievement for the student with a disability and the student without a disability, but those efforts must afford persons with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same result or achievement in the most integrated setting possible.

**Alternative Procedures**

The list of alternatives leading to reasonable accommodations is unlimited. The following pages provide suggestions on accommodations which can be made for various disabilities. These procedures and suggestions for reasonable accommodation are not all-inclusive. The Dean of Students (391-2217) or the Office of Disability Services (391-2983) can provide additional ways to address specific disabilities and/or situations.

**Blind/Visually Impaired**

Many students who are legally blind have some percentage of measurable vision. Large print books, text magnifiers, alternate format texts, note takers and recorded lecturers are some of the aids that visually impaired students may use for assistance. Printing papers in larger fonts is another way to accommodate for the limited vision. Blind students may use many of the same assistive devices as vision impaired students but rely solely on audio or tactile devices to receive information. Talking calculators and computers, reading machines, and Braille machines are also used by blind students.
When lecturing to a class in which a blind student is enrolled, remember to read any information that you write on the board and try to refer to students by name as you call on them so that the blind student is aware of who is participating in class.

Blind students often need adaptation of testing arrangements. Allowing the student to take the test in a private room with a reader is one form of accommodation. Providing a take home test on a computer disk, if the student has a computer with voice output, is another way to accommodate the student. When possible, it is best to keep the testing conditions as close to those experienced by other classmates as possible to make comparison of test grades more accurate and to prevent feelings of segregation.

Blind students may use guide dogs to assist them with various tasks. The dogs are extremely well trained and should not disrupt your class. The dogs are working at all times and are welcome everyplace on campus. These are not pets.

Additional suggestions for accommodating blind students or students with visual impairments:

• Provide seating in the front of the classroom.
  • Not all students who are visually impaired know braille. Although some may take braille notes.
  • Allow tape recorders in the classroom. In the event that you are planning to publish your lecture notes and are worried about having the lectures taped, you can have the student sign a release form agreeing not to release the tapes or otherwise hinder your attempts to copyright the lectures. See Appendix B for a sample form.
  • Items written on the blackboard or overhead transparencies should also be stated orally or copied for the student.
  • Provide assistance interpreting materials which are represented graphically or pictorially.
  • Students may use recorded textbooks which they obtain through the national organization, Learning Ally, Access Text, BookShare, and BookSense. A minimum of two months’ order time is normally necessary. You can help by making textbook selections early.
  • Students may ask for assistance in locating a volunteer note taker in class. Notes can later be used in conjunction with a reader service and tapes of classroom discussion. Please preserve the confidentiality of the student by asking the class to contact the Office of Disability Services if interested in providing copies of class notes. Usually a note will be attached to the accommodation letter requesting assistance in locating a peer note taker.
  • Since larger fonts produce longer papers, designate word limits instead of page limits to establish a uniform standard for all students when assigning papers.

**Deaf or Hearing Impaired Students**

Hearing loss manifests itself in varying degrees in individuals with hearing impairments. The degree of hearing loss will determine the accommodation needed in the classroom. Not all students who are deaf or hearing impaired can lip read well enough to keep up with the discussion in a classroom or a complicated lecture. At best, a deaf person can lip read approximately 30% of what is being said.

Some students may communicate through ASL (American Sign Language). The grammar used in ASL is different from English grammar; thus, students may make errors in written English resulting from grammatical differences in the structure of the two languages. You should be aware that these mistakes are not related to the students’ intelligence and should assist the students trying to master written and spoken English.
Some students will use an ASL interpreter and some may use a CART provider (Communication Access Realtime Translation) in the classroom. There is a lag time between what is being said in class and the deaf student receiving the information. The students’ comments in the class may be delayed due to the time taken to interpret the information. You can assist the interpreter by encouraging one person to speak at a time. When talking through an interpreter, address your comments to the student. Meetings with the deaf student and the interpreter are encouraged to establish the most effective way for the deaf person to receive and communicate information. In classes with specialized vocabulary, it is useful to provide these to the student and the interpreter ahead of time so the information is accurately conveyed.

Additional suggestions for accommodating deaf students or students with hearing impairments:

• Provide front row seating.
• Look at the class when you are speaking.
• Avoid standing with your back to a window or other light source. The glare from behind you can make it difficult to read lips and other facial expressions.
• Avoid pacing.
• Repeat questions or comments made by other students/persons in the classroom before answering.
• A written sheet of “new” terms is helpful.
• Use visual aids when possible.
• Avoid oral testing.
• Because the student wears a hearing aid it is not necessarily true that he or she can discern the spoken word.
• Most people who are deaf who do not speak choose not to because they feel their speech will not be understood.
• As with other disabilities, a note taker may be requested. It is nearly impossible for the person to take notes and or watch an interpreter simultaneously.

Mobility/Coordination Impaired

Access to classroom facilities is one of the major problems faced by students with mobility impairments. Given the distance between some of the classrooms at Shelton State, a student with a mobility impairment may be chronically late. It is appropriate and helpful to talk to the student about the situation and seek solutions together. It may be necessary to move the class closer to the student’s previous class so that she/he can be on time. The student may need to leave early from one class in order to make it to the next in a reasonable amount of time.

If your office is in an inaccessible location and a student with a mobility impairment would like an appointment, it will be necessary to find an alternate, private location that is accessible to the student.

Additional suggestions for accommodating students with mobility impairments:

• Provide a space among the desks for a wheelchair, if necessary.
• Provide advance notice if class activity will be held elsewhere. If the assigned area has restricted accessibility, it requires the relocation of the class activity to an accessible site.
• If the student has limited use of his/her hands, providing a written list of terms is helpful.

• A student with limited hand function may also need assistance in test taking and/or extended time limits. Prior to examinations, contact the Office of Disability Services to make appropriate arrangements for students with limited motor control.

• A note taker may be requested by students with limited motor control.

Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs)

This is one of the most common disabilities faced by students. Dyslexia, developmental aphasia, dysgraphia, expressive dysphasia, aural receptive dysphasia, and sequential memory disorder are types of SLDs. Although the processes by which a student learns may be disrupted by their disability, their capacity to learn remains intact. A person with a specific learning disability is often of above average intelligence but has difficulty processing information due to neurologically based sensory and motor functions. For example, some students may be extremely good at written assignments but experience failure in oral examinations due to difficulties processing oral information.

If you notice a student who performs exceptionally well in class yet consistently underperforms on exams or quizzes, you may want to refer them to the Office of Disability Services. Many students are first diagnosed with learning disabilities in college when time pressures and other factors create new work environments. Other students may have been diagnosed with an SLD at a young age and may have spent a lot of time in classes learning how to cope with their disability. Consequently, skills such as research or essay writing may not have been developed before coming to college.

The Office of Disability Services works with students to develop accommodations that will help them achieve success in their academic work. Accommodations include but are not limited to extended time on tests, note takers in class, alternate format texts, permission to use word processors for in class assignments, transcribers, and tutors. Professors are not expected to alter the requirements or the standards for their courses. However, a traditional manner of testing may be an ineffective way to test the knowledge of a student with a SLD. It is important to remember that students with learning disabilities may fail a test even though they know the information; they flunk the testing process rather than the subject itself. Finding alternate formats that satisfy your requirements yet allow the student to express their knowledge is the ideal solution to this problem.

Additional points to remember when teaching students with SLDs:

• A student’s needs often result from impaired information processing. He/she typically has trouble taking information in through the senses and interpreting or inter-relating that information in a given time frame.

• Some are unable to communicate effectively through printing or cursive writing (dysgraphia). Oral examinations and reports are more valid evaluations of their learning.

• Others are, for all practical purposes, “lecture deaf” (aural receptive dysphasia) and adopt techniques such as recording lectures and/or requesting note takers.

• Some have difficulty with sequential memory tasks involving letters (spelling), numbers (mathematics), and following step-by-step instructions.

• The majority spend inordinate amounts of time on their assignments, depriving themselves of sufficient sleep.
Chronic Health Impairments

Chronic health impairments include cystic fibrosis, diabetes, sickle cell anemia, cancers, AIDS, hemophilia, seizure disorders, muscular dystrophy, rheumatoid arthritis and many others. At times these diseases can have acute phases requiring bed rest or hospitalization. Absenteeism, associated with the disability, needs to be accepted and schedules for requirements may need adjustment. Many students with chronic illnesses tire easily, suffer from the side effects of the medication they take, and have difficulty maintaining a consistent schedule. Some students who require attendant care must rely on the promptness of their attendants in getting them to class. If you observe sporadic attendance or performance, meeting with the student may be necessary to isolate the problem and possible solutions. It is important to establish a procedure for the student to communicate with you when they must miss class due to their illness.

Additional points to remember when teaching students with chronic illnesses:

- Late completion of selected assignments or courses may be necessitated.
- Scribes, class notes, or taped lectures may be necessary.
- Occasional use of wheelchairs may be necessary.
- Medications may change and create changes in behavior.

First aid for seizure disorders is basically very simple, and is designed to protect the safety of the person until the seizure stops naturally by itself. These are the key things to remember:

- Seizure Aid:
  - Remain calm and reassure other students.
  - Send someone to call 911 (or 9-911 if using a college telephone) or follow directions on accommodations sheet.
  - Call Campus Security.
  - Ease the student to the floor.
  - Remove objects that may injure the student.
  - Do not attempt to stop the seizure nor interfere with the student’s movements.
  - Let the seizure run its course.
  - Never try to place any object in the mouth.
  - Turn the head or body to the side to prevent the tongue from slipping to the back of the throat interfering with breathing.
  - Do not attempt to revive a student who may turn pale, have irregular breathing, or stop breathing.
  - Seizure activity will diminish and they will breathe regularly on their own.
  - Assure a student who has experienced a seizure that all is well and that you understand. Attempt to give student privacy if bladder incontinence occurs after a Grand Mal seizure. Allow the student who has experienced a Grand Mal seizure to rest and check their condition frequently. They will usually be disoriented and extremely tired.
  - Do not give food or drink unless seizure activity has passed.

□ Call an ambulance only if seizure is prolonged or another one starts soon after the first.

(Contributed by Epilepsy Foundation)
Emotional Disabilities

Emotional illnesses such as clinical depression, bipolar illness, schizophrenia, or eating disorders can cause difficulties for the student in establishing and maintaining social relations. The severity of the emotional illness varies from case to case as does the manifestation of the symptoms of the disease. Some students become very withdrawn, miss classes, or forget deadlines or assignments during “down” cycles of their illness. Do not make assumptions about the students’ abilities based on complications they experience due to their illness. Even though many of these illnesses are “invisible”, their effects on the lives of students can be profound. Try to talk with the student to establish a timeline for completing work that is achievable given the obstacles faced by the student. If you have any questions about working with a student with an emotional illness, do not hesitate to contact the Counseling Center or Office of Disability Services for assistance.

- Whether the illness is transitory, genetic, or prolonged, these students need special consideration.
- Refer the student to the Counseling Center, and/or Office of Disability Services.
- Reasonable allowance should be made for unpredictable absence.
- Confer with the Office of Disability Services in determining which accommodations meet the requirements of your course and the needs of the student.

Drug or Alcohol Abuse

The problems faced by students who are recovering from alcoholism or drug abuse can be similar to those faced by students with emotional illnesses. Some special considerations follow:

- Thinking, especially spontaneous responses, may be distorted.
- There may be difficulties with memory and the student may appear distractible and/or disorganized.
- These students may be reticent to speak in classes.
- The students may become quite dependent, if so encouraged.
- Reasonable allowance should be made for unpredictable absences.
- The student may fall behind in assigned work and need extensions. They are mastering a new way of living and put great energy into that job.
- Timed conditions can be unmanageable.
- Word processing can help with the organization of material.
Process for Appealing Recommended Accommodations

In the event that an accommodation recommended by the Office of Disability Services is not appropriate for your course, please use the following appeals process.

1. The faculty member should write to the Dean of Students and outline the reasons that the recommended accommodation is being challenged.
2. The Dean of Students will attempt to resolve the issue.
3. If the Dean of Students is not able to resolve the issue, he or she will contact the Dean of Instruction. Only the Dean of Students, the Dean of Instruction and the President can access documentation of the student’s disability without explicit permission from the student. If the Deans are unable to resolve the issue, then it is referred to the President.
4. The Dean of Instruction will attempt to resolve the issue.
5. The President will make the final determination about the appropriateness of the accommodation.
6. Until resolution can be reached, the accommodation suggested should be provided so that the student does not suffer during this process.

Appendix A: The Regulations

In September 1973, Congress passed Public Law 93-112, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which was amended in 1974 by Public Law 93-516. Section 504 of the Act states:

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

In May 1977, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare issued regulations implementing Section 504. This nondiscrimination statute and the regulation issued under it (specifically Sub-part E) guarantees a right of entrance for qualified students with disabilities into our nation’s colleges and universities. The regulation, as written, incorporates the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. In May 1980, the Regulation was reissued and codified as 34 Code of Federal Regulations 104 by the Department of Education. Section 504 represents the first Federal Civil Rights Law protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The language of the law is comparable with that of Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of sex.

On July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed with the intention of further eliminating discrimination against persons with disabilities through enforceable standards set by the federal government. The Act focuses on areas of employment and access to public transportation, public accommodations and communications, all of which pertain to colleges and universities. Built upon Section 504 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the act states its purpose as providing “a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities.”

Guidelines of the Regulations

We are therefore expected as academicians and administrators to uphold the following conditions, amongst others, set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 104:

1. The College may not limit the number of students with disabilities admitted.
2. Preadmission inquiries as to whether an applicant is disabled are prohibited. Students may self-declare a demonstrated disability to the Dean of Students.

3. No student may be excluded from any course of study solely on the basis of a disability.

4. Modifications in degree or academic course requirements will be made to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate against qualified students with disabilities.

5. Prohibitive rules such as those barring tape recorders from the classroom must be waived for certain students with disabilities.

6. Auxiliary aids must be permitted in the classroom when they are required to ensure full participation of the students with disabilities.

7. Alternate testing and evaluation methods for measuring student achievement will be necessary for students with impaired cognitive, sensory, manual, or speaking skills (except where these are the skills being measured).

8. Special equipment or devices used in the classroom (and, in some cases, teaching techniques that rely upon sight, hearing, or mobility of students) may require adaptation by faculty in individual disability cases. This may include the switching of classrooms.

9. Counseling students with disabilities toward more restrictive careers than students without disabilities is discriminatory unless such counsel is based on strict, defensible licensing or certification requirements in a profession. The regulation also states that the College is not required to provide ramps, elevators, and other devices to remove physical barriers in every building or in every part of a single building, but is required to make every program, viewed as a whole, accessible. It is the College’s responsibility to provide parking for individuals with disabilities at or near each of the Campus entrances that have been made accessible. With the number of mobility impaired students increasing annually, it will be necessary to strictly enforce parking and transportation rules to ensure that space is available for their vehicles.

Lastly, the regulation states that if the Director of the Office for Civil Rights finds that the institution has discriminated against persons on the basis of disability, termination of federal financial assistance could result. Although internal administrative processing of complaints through the College’s Office of the Dean of Students is encouraged, students with disabilities who feel discriminated against have the right to utilize the Office of Civil Rights and the federal court system to settle their claims.
Appendix B: Sample Agreement for Taping Lectures

Dean of Students
Shelton State Community College

In the “Rules and Regulations” outlining procedures for compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Non-discrimination on the Basis of Handicap), it is stated, in the HEW Regulations, § 84.44 (B), “a recipient to which this subpart applies (SSCC) may not impose upon handicapped students...rules such as the prohibition of tape recorders (or braillers) in classrooms...that have the effect of limiting the participation of handicapped students in the recipient’s (SSCC) education program or activity.”

Some professors may later want to copyright lectures and therefore are concerned about allowing students to tape record their lectures. This problem can be solved by the student’s completing the following agreement:

**Agreement for Taping Lectures**

I, *(name of student)*, agree that I will not release the tape recording or transcription or otherwise hinder *(name of professor)*’s ability to obtain a copyright on lectures I taped in *(department, course #, title)*.

Student signature: Date:

The student gives this to the professor upon completing it.

*(The College Student with a Disability: A Faculty Handbook: p. 30)*

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Some of the information contained herein was compiled directly from the following pamphlets:


*Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.*