

**Gordon State College**  
**Counseling and Accessibility Services**  
Student Center - Rm.212  
419 College Drive, Barnesville, GA 30204  
678-359-5585 / 678-359-5193 (confidential fax)

## **Guidelines for Accessibility Accommodations**

Welcome to Gordon State College Counseling and Accessibility Services. Students seeking accommodations for any disability should follow the following guidelines.

### **How to Begin**

#### **Step I. Register Disability with Accessibility Services Office**

##### **Making the First Call**

Unless you are a minor (under age 18), the first step is to contact the Accessibility Services Office at Gordon State College. (Only if the student is a minor may a parent make an appointment on behalf of the student to discuss accommodations). Students are responsible for scheduling and following the process for requesting accommodations. If the student signs a release allowing the parent to be a part of the process, then the parent may participate in the meeting.

Request an appointment to meet with a staff member to register your disability. Call 678-359-5585 to request an appointment. Please indicate that you are a student requesting a meeting to provide documentation of a disability so that you can be assessed for academic accommodations.

A face to face meeting is required to register your disability. Due to the confidential nature of these records we will not accept documentation that is "dropped off" prior to a meeting. Documentation mailed to our office will be placed in a file until the student contacts Accessibility Services. Documentation should be provided to the staff member when you meet with them. Accessibility Services will begin a file for you in the Accessibility Services office (this file is maintained in the Accessibility Services Office and is not shared with faculty or other offices). If you need copies of your documentation, we will gladly make a copy and return the originals to you during the meeting.

Your documentation will be reviewed to determine what accommodations you may qualify for. Per Board of Regents policy, some disabilities require that documentation be sent to the Regents Center for Learning Disorders, in Atlanta, for approval.

Accommodations at the college level are different. Previous provision of accommodations in high school may not be sufficient documentation for college-level accommodations.

## **Step II. Documentation - What to Bring to Appointment**

### **Gathering Documentation**

Bring any documentation that you think is relevant to your disability. For learning disabilities this may include the most recent complete copy of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) from high school (not case summary or IEP review notes), and a *complete copy of the most recent psychological testing*. In most cases, the Board of Regents requires that documentation be dated within 3 years of the student's application for services. Any condition that is unchanging would be exempt from this requirement, such as a student who has been blind since birth.

### **Definition of a Disability**

- An individual must demonstrate that his/her condition meets the definition of a disability under the Rehabilitation Act, 1973 and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 1990 and its Amendment (2009). The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- Substantially limits, under ADA, refers to significant restrictions as to the condition, manner, or duration under which an individual can perform a particular major life activity as compared to most people.
- Whether a condition is substantially limiting to support an accommodation request is a decision made by a qualified professional(s) based upon multiple sources of information.
- A clinical diagnosis is not synonymous with a disability. The specific symptoms that are present should be stated in the documentation. Evidence that these symptoms are associated with substantial impairment in a major life activity is required for provision of accommodations. A detailed description of current substantial limitation in the academic environment is essential to identify appropriate academic accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Specific requests for accommodations need to be linked to the student's current functional limitations, and the rationale for each recommendation clearly stated.

## **General Documentation Guidelines**

- Secondary education eligibility reports, Individualized Education Plans, Summary of Progress reports, or previous provision of special education services may not be sufficient documentation for college-level accommodations.
- Documentation should provide a diagnostic statement identifying the disability, describe the diagnostic criteria and methodology used to diagnose the condition, and detail the progression of the condition if its impact on the student's functioning is expected to change over time.
- Documentation should provide an adequate representation of the student's current functional abilities.
- Documentation must include the names, signatures, titles, and license numbers of the appropriate evaluators, as well as the dates of testing and contact information. Evaluators must be licensed professionals whose training and licensure status is consistent with expertise in the disability for which they provide documentation.

For specific documentation guidelines please refer to the University System of Georgia Documentation Guidelines link:

[http://www.usg.edu/academic\\_affairs\\_handbook/section3/793/#pappendix\\_d\\_disability\\_documentation](http://www.usg.edu/academic_affairs_handbook/section3/793/#pappendix_d_disability_documentation)

Document guidelines on the University System of Georgia website are organized into nine disability categories:

- 1) *Learning Disabilities*
- 2) *Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder*
- 3) *Pervasive developmental disorders*
- 4) *Acquired brain injuries*
- 5) *Psychological disorders*
- 6) *Sensory disorders*
- 7) *Mobility disorders*
- 8) *System Disorders*
- 9) *Other disabilities*

## **Step III. The Approval Process**

**Learning Disabilities, AD/HD, Pervasive Developmental Disorders, Acquired Brain Injuries, Psychological Disorders, and some other Disabilities**

The documentation submitted will be certified by a staff member and referred to the Regents Center for Learning Disorders (RCLD) at Georgia State University for a review of

documentation. If approved, the RCLD will determine what the actual accommodations will be. Documentation reviews at the RCLD are completed on a first come, first served basis and may take several weeks. Accommodations are not retroactive: in most cases students must wait to be approved to receive accommodations. For example, if a student is granted accommodations half way through the semester they cannot go back and apply the accommodations to work previously completed. With the appropriate supporting documentation, temporary accommodations for one semester *may be provided* on a case by case basis upon the review of the documentation by the Director of Accessibility Services.

#### **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

The Board of Regents has very specific guidelines for documenting and receiving accommodations for AD/HD. The manifestations of AD/HD must result in functional impairment in at least two setting (e.g., academic, occupational, social). The diagnosis of AD/HD is based on the specific criteria included in the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association. Please refer to the Board of Regents website.

#### **Students Who Need Updated Testing**

The Regents Center for Learning Disorders (RCLD) at Georgia State University provides comprehensive testing for students with learning disorders. The cost for testing at the RCLD is \$500.00 (Check or money order). The student is responsible for paying the fee to the RCLD. The RCLD will accept partial payment; \$250 must be submitted with packet. The remaining balance (\$250) is due at the time of testing. In order to be tested at the RCLD you must be referred to them by the Office of Accessibility Services at the referring institution. You must make an appointment to meet with a staff member to get an RCLD testing packet. The packet will be reviewed with you in detail and the staff member will answer any questions that you may have about the packet. The packet review is required due to the comprehensive nature of the packet and the fact that the RCLD will not accept incomplete packets. Completed RCLD testing packets are reviewed and certified by the Director of Accessibility Services and forwarded along with \$250 (one half of the testing fee) to the RCLD. The RCLD will contact the student to schedule testing.

Additional information on the Regents Center for Learning Disorders may be found using the following link <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwrld/>

### **Processing Documentation for Medical Disabilities**

Mobility Disorders, System Disorders, Hearing and Vision Impairments and other types of medical disorders are reviewed on a case by case basis. Documentation should provide a diagnostic statement identifying the disability, the diagnosis and if needed the progression of the condition if its impact on the student's functioning is expected to change over time. Based on the diagnosis, updates on the status of the disability and accommodation recommendations may be required on an annual basis to continue accommodations.

Symptoms associated with a substantial impairment in a major life activity must be present and documented and a detailed description of current substantial limitations in the academic environment is necessary to identify appropriate academic accommodations, auxiliary aids and services.

Once accommodations are approved, the student will be notified by Accessibility Services and provided with instructions on how to get their Faculty Accommodation Letters each semester. A student with approved accommodations has a choice of whether or not to use approved accommodations. A student may choose not to use accommodations even though they have been approved.

## **Step IV. Informing Instructors Each Semester**

### **How to Get Accommodation Letters for Instructors**

1. Turn in a copy of your "Detailed Student Schedule" (only students can access this format) to the Accessibility Services Office. Please turn schedule in after all adjustments have been made for the semester. Turning in your schedule indicates that you are planning to attend school for the semester and are requesting that Accommodation Letters be prepared for you.
2. Accommodation Letters will be prepared for each instructor. A staff member and the student will sign each letter. Letters will be placed in envelopes with a signature from Accessibility Services on the seal for the student to give to instructor. Students are encouraged to make an appointment with the instructor to review the accommodation letter with the instructor. Making an appointment will allow time for the student to discuss the actual accommodations that are needed and what the expectations are for the instructor and the student. To maintain confidentiality, the student should not discuss the accommodations with the instructor in front of the class. You are not required to tell any instructor what your disability is and they should not ask. If you feel comfortable telling the

instructor, then knowing what your disability is may assist the instructor in helping you with an approved accommodation.

3. **Faculty Accommodation Form (green)** - This form lists each class a student is taking. Each instructor will sign the form indicating that they received the accommodation letter. The student will sign at the bottom of the letter giving permission for Accessibility Services to discuss their accommodations with appropriate faculty and other college officials. The Student will keep the Faculty Accommodation form until all letters are delivered and the instructors have signed the form indicating that they received the letter.
4. Next step, return Faculty Accommodation Form to the Accessibility Services office. **Student is responsible** for returning Faculty Accommodation Form to Accessibility Services with all faculty signatures in place. (Note\*\*Students taking on-line classes may attach an email from their instructor verifying that they have received the accommodation letter). **Failure to return Faculty Accommodation Letter to Accessibility Services within 14 days from beginning of classes for the semester will result in student accommodations being suspended until receipt of the letter by Accessibility Services.**

#### **Testing Guidelines**

1. Students who have been approved for testing accommodations need to discuss their testing needs with the instructor. The instructor should be reminded of the approved extra time for testing **before** each scheduled test. For students approved for additional time and/or a reduced distraction environment, the instructor may provide the student with space near their office, or they may refer the student to the Testing Center to take their test there. The Testing Center is located on the second floor of the Student Center, room 235 (near the Student Success Center).
2. Students who may test in the Testing Center must sign the **Guidelines for Testing Accommodations** form (yellow). Students will be provided with a personal copy of the guidelines.
3. Students who plan to test in the Testing Center should provide a copy of their accommodation letter to the Director of the Testing Center, Ms. Sue Gilpin, and have her sign off on the Faculty Accommodation Form (green). This letter will provide Ms. Gilpin with a list of the accommodations provided related to testing.
4. Testing Accommodations may be provided by the Testing Center based on available testing space and only with a completed Exam Accommodation form (blue) signed by instructor in advance. **Student is responsible for taking the Testing Accommodation form to the instructor for approval and then to the Testing Center to schedule a test. SCHEDULE TESTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE,** the Testing Center schedule can be very hectic.