

Gadsden State Community College
Student Handbook for
Disability Services (ADA)



Disability Services and Resources Office
Joe Ford Center, Suite 102
East Broad Campus
Gadsden, AL 35903
Telephone: 256-549-8462

NOTE: This Handbook is intended to be used as a supplement to the Challenge Accepted Booklet. Both the handbook and the booklet are available in print form and on the Gadsden State website via the Disability Services and Resources link under Future Students, Current Students and International Students.

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WHO WE ARE and WHY WE EXIST

This handbook will serve as a resource and answer questions that you may have about documentation, accommodations, and policies and procedures. We hope this will assist you as you fulfill your academic career.

Disability Services and Resources Vision

A campus community in which students with disabilities are equal members without barriers.

Mission

The Gadsden State Disability Services and Resources Office will interact and collaborate with administration, faculty, staff, and students to achieve an equitable learning and work environment and campus experience for students, employees and visitors with disabilities.

Guiding Principles

Disability Services and Resources exercises these principles to promote an environment where disability is seen as a valued aspect of diversity:

- **Equity** – Access is achieved only when all students can fully participate in the educational opportunities, activities, and services offered by GSCC.
- **Collaboration** – Access happens when individuals from across campus come together to meet the needs of a diverse community of learners.
- **Excellence** – We strive to establish best practices through leadership in addressing barriers to access and furthering the global conversation on disability in higher education.

Awareness and Outreach

The Disability Services and Resources Office is available to students, faculty, staff and administration to assist, advise or consult concerning any disability related issue. The office works hard to increase awareness through education and outreach

Legal Background

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is the civil rights guarantee for persons with disabilities in the United States. It provides protection from discrimination for individuals on the basis of disability. The ADA extends civil rights protection for people with disabilities to employment in the private sector, transportation, public accommodations, services provided by state and local government, and telecommunication relay services. Consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act (ADA-AA) of 2008, it is the policy of Gadsden State Community College that no qualified person with a disability shall be subjected to discrimination because of that disability under any program or activity conducted or sponsored by the College.

Legal Requirements

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title II and Section 504 prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in education and public accommodations.
- There must be equal access to all facilities, programs, services, and activities of the college.
- The college is NOT covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which applies to K-12 institutions and requires individualized education plans (IEPs). There is no Special Education in College.

What Is a Disability as Defined by the ADA?

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- What Is a Major Life Activity? Breathing, Seeing, Walking, Working, Hearing, Caring for oneself, Speaking, Learning,

Who Is Covered?

- Protects all persons with a disability from discrimination based solely on a disability in an educational setting.

Confidentiality of Information

Gadsden State Community College has an obligation to maintain confidentiality of evaluation information and does not release disability documentation. Strict confidentiality is maintained in all verbal communications with Gadsden State faculty and staff unless a student grants written permission or the College is required to do so by law or court order.

ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM GUIDELINES

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

1. Alabama College System institutions are not subject to IDEA. Community colleges comply with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the American Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA).
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 must furnish adequate documentation of disabilities from medical or other appropriate professionals. IEP's are NOT acceptable forms of documentation. Documentation is confidential and will not be released without permission.
4. It is recommended that students needing accommodations provide documentation and requests for accommodation one to two months 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.

6. Requests for accommodations must be made with the Office of Disability Services each term of enrollment.

Alabama Community College System institutions will not fundamentally alter or modify course or program requirements. The student must discuss accommodations with each instructor.

Goals for Providing Services to Students with Disabilities

The ultimate goal of the Disability Services and Resources Office at Gadsden State Community College is to provide individuals with disabilities the reasonable accommodations and services that will promote their success and integration into college and college related activities. The Coordinator works with students, faculty, and staff to ensure not only equal opportunity to all programs but also to ensure the academic integrity of the college is preserved. For credit courses, continuing education, and community events, individuals will be provided equal access.

1. DSR will work individually with qualified students to provide reasonable accommodations, which will allow the student to demonstrate his or her academic capability at Gadsden State.
2. DSR will assist qualified students through the transition process from high school to Gadsden State.
3. DSR will work collaboratively with other areas of the College, including faculty, to ensure equal access for all students.

Gadsden State Community College does not perform disability evaluations that determine or diagnose disabilities, nor does Gadsden State pay for such testing. Testing is the responsibility of the student.

Requesting Accommodations:

The ADA Coordinator or Campus ADA Contact will work interactively with the student to arrange reasonable accommodations. Examples of accommodations begin on page 9.

Campus ADA Contacts:

Ayers Campus

Ms. Cindy Haynes, ADA Contact

chaynes@gadsdenstate.edu, 256.835-5411

Administration Building, Room 154

Cherokee Campus

Ms. Luanne Hayes, ADA Contact

lhayes@gadsdenstate.edu, 256.927.1805

Cherokee Center, Academic Wing, Room 111

Gadsden Campuses

Ms. Pamela Clough, ADA Coordinator

pclough@gadsdenstate.edu, 256.549.8462

Joe Ford Center, East Broad Campus, Suite 102

Process for Receiving Accommodations:

1. Student should contact the Disability Services and Resources office (online, email, phone or in person) to self-identify, complete the **DSR Enrollment form**, provide appropriate **documentation of disability**, and officially request accommodations. (These forms can be found on the DSR website.)
2. The **ADA Coordinator** reviews the completed enrollment form and all documentation provided by the student to support their request. If necessary, faculty is consulted concerning specific accommodations.
3. The DSR office makes a decision of the validity of the request for accommodations and opens a file for each qualified student.

4. The DSR Office completes an Academic Modifications and Adjustments form, which outlines the proposed allowable accommodations. The form is emailed to the student's instructors and the student is copied on the email.
5. Once the email is distributed, the student should contact each instructor to discuss the accommodations and ensure that they are mutually understood.
6. If the student or faculty member encounters a problem or issue, contact the ADA Coordinator as soon as possible. If the issue is not resolved, the student may complete the **ADA Appeal Form**.
7. A new Academic Modifications and Adjustments form is required each semester. Students are advised to register for classes early and then contact the DSR office by email, phone, or an office visit to request accommodations. The DSR office will send reminder emails to students who are currently utilizing services that a new form is required for each semester.

It should be noted that the Disability Services and Resources Office does not provide financial aid, attendant (personal) care, transportation services, mental health counseling or tutoring.

Examples of Accommodations and Services

Providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities requires an individual assessment of need and is a problem solving process. Specific accommodations depend upon the nature and requirements of a particular course or activity and the skills and functional abilities of a particular student. Appropriate accommodations may include but are not limited to the listings below.

General Accommodations:

- **Accessibility** – The DSR Office partners with Facilities Services and the Residence Hall to facilitate access to buildings, the dormitory, parking lots and other locations on campus. Students with disabilities who experience physical barriers should contact DSR for assistance.
- **Early Registration** – When applicable, a student with a disability may register during early registration through Disability Services or Student Support Services. The student is still responsible for obtaining advisement with college advisors.
- **Service Animals** - In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are permitted on the college campus and in its facilities. Service animals are animals that have been trained to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. To be permitted on campus, a service animal must be specifically trained to perform a service function. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition. The service animal should wear a harness, cape, identification tag, or other gear that readily identifies its working status. The person using the service animal is responsible for controlling the animal's behavior, caring for the animal, and cleaning up after the animal. A service animal whose behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others may be excluded regardless of training or certification. Complete **Service Animal Policy, Procedures** and **Forms** can be found on the DSR Website.
- **Library Access and Assistance** - For library users with physical disabilities, reasonable efforts are made to maintain a barrier-free facility. Assistance is available at the Circulation Desk or in any library office. Accommodations for library services or facilities for persons with disabilities are made on a case-by-case basis in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 as amended. Disability Services Office assistive-technology assets related to library access include closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs), screen reader software, magnification software and adjustable height tables. Accommodation requests requiring special equipment or software should be directed to the ADA Coordinator.
- **Accessible Parking** - Accessible parking is available for individuals near the

front of each building on campus. The College recognizes permits issued by the state for the use of these areas and may authorize temporary parking passes for students with temporary medical conditions. For more information, contact the ADA Coordinator.

- **TTY / TDD Location** - SS Office at Ayers Campus, 256.832.1234

Testing Accommodations:

- **Extended Time** - Testing accommodations may include extended time (1.5x or 2x)
- **Isolated Testing Area / Reduced- distraction testing environment**
- **Recorded or Orally administered tests** (including reading and/or software)
- **Scribes**

Students should discuss testing accommodations with their instructors at the beginning of each semester. Testing accommodations procedures vary from campus to campus. The procedures are discussed in the intake meeting. Any student with questions about testing accommodations should contact the ADA Coordinator.

As long as the student's required accommodations can be met (e.g. extended time, reduced-distractions), the preferred method is for the student to be accommodated by the instructor or at least within the department. The DSR Office acts as an extension of the academic area by proctoring tests when neither the instructor nor the department is able to provide the accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor and DSR (if applicable) prior to the exam date. DSR will determine the alternate testing sites. These sites may include: the DSR testing room, Student Support Services (TRIO), the GSCC Testing Center or, at times, Media Services.

Specific details are worked out between the student and his or her test proctor. The test proctor will communicate with the instructor in order to ensure that the accommodations are provided efficiently and in accordance with the teacher's requirements for test administration.

Classroom Accommodations:

- **Classroom Accessibility** - Students with mobility or physical impairments that hinder their ability to navigate to class will receive assistance in order to coordinate their classroom locations to accessible spaces.
- **Alternate Formats for Assignments** - In many cases, assignments may be submitted in formats other than those stated in course requirements (i.e., recorded rather than written or typed, and typed rather than hand written).
- **Extended Time on Assignments** - Some students with disabilities may be approved for an accommodation of modified attendance and/or deadlines due to a disability-related need, which may require the development of a Modified Attendance & Deadline Agreement for a student in a specific course. Generally, these students have disabilities, which are chronic or episodic in nature which may cause difficulties with regular class attendance and completing work. This might include, but is not limited to, students with diabetes, epilepsy, cancer, mental health disabilities, migraines and conditions requiring on-going or specialized medical treatment.
- **Recorders / Note takers** - Students may be permitted to record class lectures or be assigned a peer note taker as a reasonable accommodation. The peer note taker is normally a volunteer that is identified by the instructor. The note taker delivers the notes to a predetermined office for the student to pick up. The identity of the student is confidential.
- **Sign Language Interpreters / CART Captionists** - Gadsden State will provide qualified sign language interpreters and CART captionists for deaf or hearing-impaired students. For a complete copy of the Policies and Procedures concerning SLI and CART please see the DSR Webpage.
- **Readers / Scribes** - Text-to-Speech software such as Text-Aloud is commonly used to provide reading accommodations for exams. However, when appropriate, the College will also provide readers and scribes.
- **Adaptive Technology** – The College provides adaptive technology, free of charge, for students with disabilities unless to do so would prove an undue burden, remove one or more of the essential functions of the class or program, or lower the academic standards of the college. Students may be permitted to use calculators (restrictions apply), word processors, closed circuit televisions (CCTVs), electronic dictionaries, and spell checkers for in- class work. FM Systems are available for loan to students with hearing impairments in order to facilitate classroom communication with instructors and classmates. An Amplified Stethoscope is available for students with hearing impairments who can't hear standard stethoscopes. For students who qualify, the following equipment/services are currently available. Others will be purchased/installed as needed.
 - E-Texts (electronic copies of textbooks, restrictions apply)

- Calculators (restrictions apply)
- TextAloud text-to-speech software
- FM Systems (for use by hearing-impaired students)
- Sign Language Interpreters and CART Captionists
- Readers, Scribes and Note takers
- Large print copies of syllabi, tests and handouts
- Amplified Stethoscope
- Closed-Circuit Televisions (CCTVs, stationary)—screen enlargers for use in libraries, computer labs, classrooms
- Scanner (SSS Gadsden)
- Braille embosser (SSS Gadsden)
- Adjustable Height Tables

Form to request the Adaptive Technology can be found on the DSR website and should be completed at least six weeks before the semester begins to allow time for equipment to be ordered or services to be contracted.

- **Assistive Computer Software** - Window-Eyes, ZoomText, Jaws, Scientific Notebook. Most accessibility software is purchased with site-licenses allowing the programs to be installed on any Gadsden State computer when requested by a student with a disability.

Please note that accommodations that require additional lead-time, such as interpreters, captionists and adaptive technology, require advance notice to the DSR office.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: May colleges deny services if a student refused to document his or her disability?

A: Yes. A college has no obligation to provide services to a student who refused to provide documentation of his or her disability.

Q: Can a college be held liable under the ADA if it is unaware of a student's disability?

A: No. The college's obligation to provide a reasonable accommodation applies only to known disabilities.

Q: Does an institution have any obligation to lower its ADMISSIONS standards for individuals with disabilities?

A: No. An applicant's disability should play no part in an admission decision and the institution has no obligation to lower its admissions standards to admit an applicant with a disability.

Q: What is the scope of the college's obligation to provide auxiliary aids or services to students with disabilities in the classroom?

A: An educational institution has a duty to provide reasonable accommodations in the classroom for students with known disabilities when services have been requested in a timely manner.

Q: Does a college have any obligation to provide personal services or devices?

A: No. An educational institution is not required to provide a student with a disability with personal or individually prescribed devices.

Q: Must an institution lower its ACADEMIC standards to accommodate a student with a disability?

A: No. But it should be noted that a college may be required to make some modifications to its academic requirements to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating on the basis of the student's disability.

Q: Does an institution's obligation extend to providing accommodations during a test to a student with a disability?

A: Yes. Reasonable accommodation must be provided if appropriate notice is given.

Q: Must an institution's library materials be accessible to students with disabilities?

A: Yes. The institution has an obligation to ensure that students have effective access to library materials.

NOTE: If you do not see your question listed here visit the DSR Website; you will find a list of Frequently Asked Questions for Students, a list for Parents and also one for Faculty.