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**Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education:
Know Your Rights and Responsibilities**

Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
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More and more high school students with disabilities are planning to continue their education in postsecondary schools, including vocational and career schools, two- and four-

No. But if you want the school to provide an academic adjustment, you must identify yourself as having a disability. Likewise, you should let the school know about your disability if you want to ensure that you are assigned to accessible facilities. In any event, your disclosure of a disability is always voluntary.

When should I request an academic adjustment?

Although you may request an academic adjustment from your postsecondary school at any time, you should request it as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. You should follow your school's procedures to ensure that the school has enough time to review your request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment.

Do I have to prove that I have a disability to obtain an academic adjustment?

Generally, yes. Your school will probably require you to provide documentation showing that you have a current disability and need an academic adjustment.

What documentation should I provide?

Schools may set reasonable standards for documentation. Some schools require more documentation than others. They may require you to provide documentation prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist, or other qualified diagnostician. The required documentation may include one or more of the following: a diagnosis of your current disability, as well as supporting information, such as the date of the diagnosis, how that diagnosis was reached, and the credentials of the diagnosing professional; information on how your disability affects a major life activity; and information on how the disability affects your academic performance. The documentation should provide enough information for you and your school to decide what is an appropriate academic adjustment.

An individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, if you have one, may help identify services that have been effective for you. This is generally not sufficient documentation, however, because of the differences between postsecondary education and high school education. What you need to meet the new demands of postsecondary education may be different from what worked for you in high school. Also, in some cases, the nature of a disability may change.

If the documentation that you have does not meet the postsecondary school's requirements, a school official should tell you in a timely manner what additional documentation you need to provide. You may need a new evaluation in order to provide the required documentation.

should be sent to Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources, not to the Office of Admissions.

The Office of New Student Orientation provides programs for incoming students. Students with disabilities are encouraged to visit Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources during orientation. Students who may need accommodations during orientation should contact New Student Orientation at 460-7093. The New Student Orientation office is located at 2600 Meisler Hall.

New Student Orientation website:

<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/orientation/index.html>

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Academic Advising

Academic Advising is offered to students as a guide to what classes to take each semester. Each student has an advisor based on the current college he or she is enrolled in under the declared major. Contact information for each college is provided on the home Academic Advisor webpage. The link to find the colleges and their respective advisors is as follows.

<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicadvising/>

Assistive Computer Technology

Assistive computer technology is available in the Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources computer lab. The lab is wheelchair accessible and contains text-to-voice software, text scanning equipment, screen readers and magnifiers.

Campus Accessibility

Students are responsible for notifying Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources if a classroom, activity, or program is not accessible. Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources is responsible for arranging appropriate accommodations.

Career Services

Career Services assists students and alumni by providing educational and career resources and advising. Part-time, full-time, internship, and cooperative education positions may be available through Career Services. Contact Career Services at 4606188. Career Services is located at 2100 Meisler Hall.

Career Services website: <http://www.southalabama.edu/careerservices/>

Counseling and Testing Services

USA Counseling and Testing Services is a comprehensive developmental/mental health center providing a full range of

USA is not obligated to provide services for students with disabilities until students register with Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources and request accommodations.

Financial Aid

Office of Financial Aid offers grants, loans, scholarships, and work-study for eligible students. Students with disabilities are eligible for the same financial assistance as other students: there are no federal financial aid programs specifically for students with disabilities. The Financial Aid Office is located 1200 Meisler Hall. Contact Financial Aid at 460-6231. Financial Aid website: <http://www.southalabama.edu/finaid/>

(Documentation is maintained securely and disability diagnoses are kept confidential.) In addition, confidentiality is maintained in all verbal conversations between Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources staff members and registered students and faculty/staff. Generally, no information is released to anyone outside of Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources without the student's informed and written consent. Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources may release information to USA officials if there is a direct threat to the health or safety of USA students, faculty, and/or staff. Documentation is destroyed seven years after the last semester students are enrolled at USA.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

All reports should be typed on letterhead, dated and signed.

- c. Relevant, developmental, historical, and familial data
- d. Behavioral Assessment Instruments for ADHD normed on adults; these should include at least two ratings scales (with scores and summary data) completed by individuals other than parents (preferably teachers).

VI.

- Mini-Battery of Achievement (These are not comprehensive measures of achievement and are therefore not suitable for documentation purposes at USA)

VII. **Diagnosis** - A clear and specific statement that the student is diagnosed with ADHD and the accompanying DSM-V code(s) are required. Must include DSM-V

- IV. **Neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessments** - Data should include subtest and standard scores to support conclusions, and should at least include **most recent versions** of a comprehensive intelligence battery **and** a comprehensive achievement battery.

All reports must include an interpretation of test results. Test protocol sheets, handwritten summary sheets or scores alone are not sufficient.

Acceptable instruments – Aptitude / Cognitive ability

- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III (or latest version). The WAIS is the preferred instrument
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery – Revised: Test of Cognitive Ability
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale

Unacceptable instruments – Aptitude / Cognitive ability

- The Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT) is not a comprehensive measure and is therefore not suitable for documentation purposes at USA
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) – this instrument is not standardized for use with adults

Acceptable instruments – Academic Achievement

- The Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery – Revised: Test of Achievement
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
- Standard Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Specific achievement tests such as Test of Written Language – 3 (TOWL-3), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests – Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test

IV. Assessment of Mobility, Sensory, and/or Systemic Disorder – A description of current symptoms and current treatments must be included. If the student is taking any medication related to the disability, the evaluator should describe the impact of that medication on the student's ability to participate in an academic environment.

a **Statutory blindness** is defined in the law as central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of correcting lens. An eye which has a limitation in the field of vision so that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees is considered to have a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less." (as required by the Social Security Administration Code of Federal Regulations § 404.1581).

x examples of acceptable documentation proving legal blindness would be an eye report from an ophthalmologist, a statement from a physician, certified vocational rehabilitation counselor or low vision specialist.

b **Statutory deafness** is defined as

- II. **Current Documentation** – Evaluation data must be no more than one year old.
- III. **History to Support Diagnosis** – A description of the duration and severity of the disorder must be included. In addition, relevant medical, familial, and social histories should be included.
- IV. **Assessment of Psychiatric Disorders** – The evaluator should include specific evaluation data to support a diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder. Results of standardized assessments, rating scales, or checklists are important, but need not be the sole criterion for a diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder. A description of current symptoms and current treatments must be included. If the student is taking any medication related to the disability, the evaluator should describe the impact of that medication on the student’s ability to participate in an academic environment.
- V. **DSM-V or ICD-10 Diagnosis** – A SPECIFIC statement that the student is diagnosed with a particular disorder, including the DSM-V or ICD-10 diagnostic (numeral) code, is required.
- VI. **Substantial Limitation to Learning** – A psychiatric disability must limit a major life activity, such as learning, sleeping, or working, and there must be a significant limitation relative to what is common to the ‘average’ person. The evaluator must describe the major life activity affected by the psychiatric disability and describe how the disability presents a substantial limitation to academic performance.
- VII. **Recommendations for Accommodations** – The report must include specific recommendations for academic accommodations and the rationale for those accommodations. A history of accommodations does not, in itself, warrant the provision of similar accommodations at USA.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

All reports should be typed on letterhead, dated and signed. _____

- I. **Qualifications of the Evaluator** – The evaluator’s name, title, and license/certificate credentials must be stated.
- II. **Current Documentation** – Evaluation data must be no more than three years old.

III. History to Support Diagnosis – A description of the duration and severity of the injury must be included. In addition, date of diagnosis, last contact with the individual, approximate date of onset, and symptoms should be included.

IV. Assessment of Cognitive Abilities and Educational Achievement – The evaluator should provide an assessment of the student's cognitive abilities, including processing speed and memory (post-rehabilitation and within one year). Also, standard scores from individually administered, standardized achievement tests must be reported. The evaluator should assess reading comprehension, written language, spelling, and mathematical abilities. If the student is taking any medication related to the disability, the evaluator should describe the impact of that medication on the student's ability to participate in a college environment.

V. DSM-V or ICD-10 Diagnosis – A SPECIFIC statement that the student is diagnosed with a neurological injury, including the DSM-

ad

Students may use calculators, dictionaries, computers, spell checkers, and/or grammar checkers for in-class work.

Priority Registration

All students registered with Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources are eligible for priority registration. Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources does not advise students on curriculum and course selection. Academic advisors are listed in the JagTraks Registration Guide on the Registration Contacts page. This information may be located on the following website:
<https://southalabama.edu/schedule/index.html>

Reading Assistance

Students may request readers, text-to-voice computer software, and/or audiobooks. Text-to-voice software is available in the Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources computer lab.

Sign Language Interpreting

Deaf and hard of hearing students may be provided with state licensed/permitted interpreters for class sessions, class-related activities, and USA-related events.

Audio Recording, Note Taking Assistance, and Scribes

Students may record class lectures and/or request peer note takers. Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources can provide recorders for students and carbonless paper for note takers. Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources can provide scribes for students requiring such assistance.

Testing Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include extended time (time and one-half to double time), reduced-distraction testing situations, and/or alternate test formats (such as Braille or orally administered tests). Tests may be administered in each department, whenever possible.

Services of a personal nature are not considered academic accommodations. Examples of personal services include tutoring, transportation, and attendant care.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Questions and concerns regarding accommodations and services for students with disabilities should be directed first to Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources. If the Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources staff members cannot resolve an issue, a meeting with the student, the instructor (if appropriate), the Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources Director, and the Dean of Students may be requested. If an agreement is not reached at this point, the student may file a formal, written appeal. The appeal s

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

(The area code is 251)

Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources	460-7212
Admissions Office	460-6141
Career Services	460-6188
Counseling & Testing Services	460-7051
Financial Aid	460-6231
Graduate School	460-6310
Residence Life	460-6185
Library	460-7025
Math Department	460-6264
Parking Services	461-1481
Campus Police	460-6312
Student Health Services	460-7151

Writing Center	460-6283
Jag Tran	460-7735
Dining Services	460
