

## **Provision of Services to Students with Disabilities**

Persons with disabilities who wish to enroll in a program of study at Chattanooga State must meet the same admissions criteria as do all other students for that program, and must achieve the stated minimum placement test or other specialty test scores with or without accommodation. Qualified students with disabilities who have been admitted to the College and who have registered with Disabilities Support Services (DSS) may be entitled to accommodation, depending on the individual needs of each student. In general, these accommodations are provided at no cost to the student. The College provides accommodations unless they cause a fundamental alteration in the academic standards of the College, or cause undue hardship on the College. Individually prescribed devices, personal care attendants, readers for personal use, or other study devices of a personal nature are not the responsibility of the College.

### **Procedure for Providing Services**

Students with disabilities must decide for themselves whether or not they want to identify their disability to DSS; however, students should be aware that it is the policy at Chattanooga State that instructors do not provide accommodations to students on an individual basis unless that instructor has first been notified by DSS that the student is a qualified student with a disability and has registered with DSS.

Once a student decides to self-identify with DSS, he should gather together as much documentation about his disability as he can locate, and make an appointment to meet with one of the professional staff in the DSS office. The student will present the documentation to the DSS staff member, who reviews the information with the student. The DSS staff member will conduct an interview with the student to gain more in-depth understanding of the impact the disability has had on the student's education up to this point.

The staff member, after reviewing the documentation provided by the student, will discuss accommodations that might be appropriate for each class in which the student is enrolled, and develop an accommodations plan that the student will deliver to each instructor. This plan must be done each semester, because the plan is specific for the classes a student has for that one semester.

At the time the accommodations plan is developed, students are instructed to report any problems with classes or suggested accommodations as soon as the student is aware there is a problem. DSS staff will make every effort to make reasonable adjustments or add additional support services so that the student is able to meet with success in the class. An instructor may also make DSS staff aware of problems that a student appears to be having in his or her class, and ask for assistance in providing needed support within the classroom.

Consideration will be given to a student's request for a preferred method of accommodation within the guidelines and procedures established, but other reasonable methods of accommodation may be authorized if appropriate.

It is suggested that students check in regularly with DSS staff to report on progress (good or bad) so that any changes can be made as soon as possible. The student has the right to, and may, refuse any accommodations that have been suggested.

### **Tutoring**

Chattanooga State provides free peer and professional tutoring through the Mathematics Center and the College Reading and Writing Center. In addition, the Career Planning and Counseling Center arranges free peer tutoring in several areas, including advanced science, business and information systems, and social and behavioral science. Tutoring services other than these specific cases mentioned above are at the expense of the student, but DSS may be able to assist the student in locating a tutor, if one is available. The student is responsible for contacting the tutor and setting up a schedule, providing appropriate study materials at each session, and notifying the tutor when he/she will not be able to meet.

### **Adaptive Equipment**

DSS provides adaptive computer equipment in several locations across campus. An Adaptive Computer Lab has been set up in the DSS offices, and is open to all students with disabilities. The lab is equipped with a variety of equipment that provides needed accommodations/modifications for many different disabilities, such as hands-free operation, voice recognition software, text enlarging software, Internet access with screen reading capabilities, a scanning/reading system, Braille translation and embossing software and hardware, and two CCTV's.

The library/IMC also houses two CCTV's, a scanning/reading system, and text enlarging software.

Students with mild to moderate hearing loss may borrow a listening system from the DSS office. Students are required to sign a contract each semester in order to check out this equipment. Also available for loan are tape recorders and talking calculators. A limited number of laptop computers is available for loan each semester for students who meet the criteria for a laptop loan. These are issued on a first come, first served basis, and are not guaranteed from one semester to another. Students who qualify to receive a laptop must schedule an appointment with Tisa Houck or Debora Ervin in the Library and complete the necessary paperwork. If a student is receiving a laptop for the first time, he must participate in a laptop check-out class (lasting about an hour) to receive instructions on policies and the proper care of the laptop. If a student does not return the laptop on the scheduled check-in date, a hold will be placed on the student's records, and he will not receive grades for the current semester, nor will he be able to register for the next semester until the laptop is returned.

### **Books on Tape or Digital Format**

Chattanooga State will apply for individual memberships to Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic for qualified students. Students with visual or learning disabilities may request textbooks on tape each semester. Books must be ordered early, since a two-to-three month turnaround period is necessary to have the tapes here on time. Students may check out specially equipped tape or digital players from the DSS office to take advantage of these tapes.

**If any loaned equipment, including laptops, is lost, stolen, or damaged while in a student's possession, the student is responsible for replacement costs.**

### **Typical Accommodations (this list is not meant to be exhaustive; it is just a sampling)**

#### **Notetakers**

Students with a variety of disabilities may have need of a notetaker in each class. Instructors assist the student in locating another student in the class who agrees to provide a photo- or carbon copy of his own notes to the student with a disability. Notetakers are sought on a voluntary basis first, but can be paid by DSS if funds are available. Having a notetaker does not relieve the student with a disability from the responsibility of attending class.

#### **Tape Recorders**

Students with disabilities are allowed to use tape recorders to class for personal study use. Instructors are always notified if a student will be bringing a tape recorder to his or her class. Taped lectures may not be used for any purpose other than for personal study. Tape recorded lectures may not be used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are taped as a part of the class activity. Information contained in the tape recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published without the consent of the lecturer. Students are required to sign a Recorded Lecture Policy before taking a recording device into the classroom.

#### **Test Modifications**

A common request for students with disabilities is extended time for test taking. Extended time is allowed on an individual basis, and is always requested in the initial accommodation notification to faculty. Under no circumstances is unlimited time allowed. Time limits are determined by the nature and severity of the student's disability and the impact it has on the student's ability to take tests; however, in most cases, a maximum of double time is adequate. See additional information on Testing Accommodations for policies and procedures that students must follow.

Another common request is an alternate location for testing. This is worked out between the student, the instructor, and DSS. The most common arrangements are for the student to take a test in the instructor's office, a study room nearby the classroom, in a campus

testing center, or in the DSS office. Students with visual disabilities may need to use equipment in the Adaptive Computer Lab in order to enlarge the text of the test to a viewable size. Tests are should always be appropriately monitored to ensure the student is doing his/her own work.

### **Interpreters**

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and use sign language as their primary means of communication will be provided with an interpreter for all classes and activities available to all students on the campus. If an interpreter is needed for an off-campus event that is related to the student's classes, an interpreter is provided at that location as well.

Interpreters' schedules are coordinated each semester to ensure that all classes are covered. Students needing an interpreter for extracurricular activities, special meetings, or other events must file a request with the DSS office as soon as possible. An interpreter will be provided for these activities, if one is available. In a few cases, it may not be possible to provide an interpreter, due to illness or scheduling conflicts, even though every effort has been made to secure someone. At those times, the instructor and student will be notified in advance, and appropriate alternate materials should be provided. The student has the responsibility of notifying the interpreter and DSS if he will not be able to attend class, so that the interpreter can be reassigned or released. After the third absence without notification, the student must meet with the director of DSS to discuss the problem and determine whether an interpreter is still needed.

### **Readers, Scribes**

Readers are provided whenever possible for students with visual impairments or a reading disability. Readers are most often DSS staff, but peer readers may be hired if the assignment is on a regular basis.

Scribes are provided for people with visual impairments or motor difficulties. Scribes serve as the hands of the student with a disability, and provide no other assistance other than putting on paper what is dictated to him/her by the student with a disability.

In certain cases, a person may serve both as a reader and a scribe, for instance, when reading a test to a student and recording his/her answers. Volunteer readers and scribes are recruited whenever possible, but DSS may be able to pay for these services, if necessary. Students with disabilities can also seek training on computer software that can accomplish these same functions without needing to use another person as an intermediary.

### **Other Support Services**

Since support services are provided to students on an individual basis, this list is not meant to be exhaustive. The college also provides career and personal counseling, academic advising, financial aid advising, job placement and co-op services, and a variety of other services that are available to the general college population. DSS will be happy to coordinate these other services for the student with a disability, if the office is made aware of a need for such services.

## **Introduction to Documentation Guidelines**

The prevailing legal climate surrounding higher education and disability issues, combined with rapid growth in the population of college students with disabilities, has provided impetus for institutions of higher education to establish criteria for documentation of disabilities appropriate for the college academic setting. State Department of Education diagnostic criteria are designed for use in determining eligibility for special education and compliance with IDEA in grades K-12 and are not always appropriate to address the issues relevant to the college environment. Established documentation guidelines applicable to higher education are needed to enable Disabilities Support Services (DSS) personnel

- To establish protection from discrimination. This is an assurance that people with disabilities will not be excluded or provided lesser access to programs and activities based on assumptions rooted in stereotype or perception of ability that are not based in fact.
- To determine the accommodations to which the individual may be entitled. Reasonable accommodations include modifications to policy, procedure, or practice and the provision of auxiliary aids and services that are designed to provide equal access to programs and services for qualified individuals with disabilities. Accommodations are reasonable when they do not fundamentally alter the nature of a program or service and do not represent an undue financial or administrative burden.

Documentation for accommodations must both establish disability and provide adequate information on the functional impact of the disability so that effective accommodations can be identified. In the context of postsecondary education, documentation should provide a basic understanding of the individual's disability and enough information to anticipate how the current impact of the disability is expected to interact with the College's structure of courses, testing methods, program requirements, and the like.

Documentation that is provided to DSS by the student is considered confidential information, and will not be shared with others without the student's permission; however, the records are considered educational records, and may be released to faculty and staff on a "need to know" basis as it relates to educational programming and planning for the student. Faculty and staff do not generally need to know the details of a student's disability, but some basic information may be shared if the DSS staff member determines that it is necessary for the faculty or staff member to know that information. Under no circumstances will anyone outside the DSS office be allowed to view the complete file of any student.

## **Records Maintenance**

Files are maintained for 5 years after a student graduates or otherwise ends his educational program at Chattanooga State. At that time, students will be notified that the records are about to be destroyed and will be given the option of picking up the material for future use. If the student does not respond to the notification, the records will be destroyed.

Sometimes, DSS receives information on someone who is thinking about enrolling at Chattanooga State, but never actually does. In that case, the information is kept for only one year from the initial contact. Those persons will be notified and given the same option to retrieve records if they choose.

## **Basic Guidelines for Documentation**

### **I. Qualifications of the Evaluator**

Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses of disabilities, and making recommendations for appropriate accommodations must be qualified to do so. In Tennessee, licensed health service providers (*e.g.*, clinical psychologists, physicians, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists) are considered qualified evaluators. In the case of psychoeducational testing (achievement) done prior to graduation at the secondary level, qualified test administrators such as exceptional education teachers, school psychologists, or guidance counselors are acceptable. Strict adherence to one's professional code of ethics is expected, especially as it relates to qualifications, dual relationships, and conflicts of interest. The evaluator's name, title, signature, professional credentials, and the state in which the individual practices should be included in the evaluation report.

### **II. Recency of Documentation**

Accommodations and services at the college level are based on the impact a student's disability has on his/her academic performance at the time of enrollment; therefore, it is in the student's best interest to provide recent documentation of the disability.

In general, students must provide documentation that is no more than five years old. In certain situations, where the disability is permanent and stable (such as deafness or blindness), older documentation may be appropriate if it is still relevant to the student's current condition. Please refer to the documentation requirements for more specific documentation information.

### **III. Documentation for Transfer Students**

Students who are planning to transfer in to Chattanooga State may be able submit older documentation for review if the student has been enrolled continuously in college and has a history of receiving accommodations and services at the postsecondary level.

#### IV. Providing Additional Information

If the documentation provided by the student is incomplete (*i.e.*, does not provide detailed information about evaluation measures, does not contain a clear disability diagnosis, is missing the professional affiliation information of the evaluator, does not meet documentation requirements), the student must take action to correct this before accommodations can be provided. Temporary accommodations may be put into place on the basis of information contained in the documentation that has been provided, but DSS reserves the right to ask for additional information on any condition that the student indicates is present but is not supported by the documentation. It is the student's responsibility to provide or update documentation. Evaluation services are not available through Chattanooga State.

#### **Criteria for Laptop Loan Program for Students with Disabilities**

The purpose of the laptop loan program for a student with a disability is to provide reasonable accommodation for the student's in-class needs.

In order to be considered for the laptop loan program, a student with a disability must have appropriate documentation on file with the office of Disabilities Support Services. This documentation must address physical and/or educational limitations that would put the student at a significant disadvantage if writing by hand is an integral part of in-class activities, such as essays, quizzes, and tests. Examples would be a student who has illegible handwriting as a result of an accident, injury or other permanent condition; a student with a significant weakness in written expression (unrelated to another disability); a student who writes slowly as a result of a physical limitation.

The laptop is not meant to serve as the primary home computer, nor is it a substitute for the numerous computer labs that are available at all campuses.

Students with disabilities who are approved for a laptop will adhere to the policies and procedures already in place for the campus laptop loan program. In addition, students with disabilities must adhere to these guidelines:

- The laptop loan is approved on a semester-by-semester basis.
- In order to be considered for future semesters, the student must return the laptop in good condition, and must demonstrate by his/her performance in class that the laptop was a necessary accommodation.
- Students must obtain a grade of "C" or better in all classes to remain eligible for a laptop.
- Students are not guaranteed a laptop from one semester to the next. Laptops are assigned on a first come, first served basis. Disabilities Support Services will prioritize the needs of all candidates each semester, and make the determination as to who receives a laptop based on where the need is greatest. Once all available laptops have been assigned, a waiting list will be created, and students may be placed on the waiting list if there are more requests received than there are laptops available.

## Testing Accommodations

Students should schedule testing through the testing areas already available on campus as much as possible. Those areas are

- Testing Center (in the Student Center)
- Math Center (IMC – for math and science tests)
- College Reading and Writing Center (IMC - for Humanities or Social Science tests)

Some students may be approved to take tests in the Disabilities Support Services (DSS) office area. Students who are determined to be eligible for this testing accommodation must abide by the following policies:

- Students are responsible for scheduling a testing time with DSS. At least 48 hours' notice is required in most cases, but during midterm and final exams, as much lead time as possible should be given so that we can ensure there is adequate space available for the number of students who will be testing. Students who simply “drop in” to take tests without notice may have to relocate to another testing area on campus if DSS is unusually busy or all available testing areas in the office are in use.
- Unless approved by the instructor, all tests and exams must be taken on the same day and at the same time as the rest of the class.
- Students must arrive on time for scheduled tests. Space or proctor availability cannot be guaranteed for students who arrive more than 15 minutes late.
- If there is an emergency that prevents the student from taking a test on the appointed day, the student should notify the instructor and DSS as soon as possible. The instructor is the only person who can give permission to reschedule the test to another day. Students who fail to show for two scheduled tests will have testing privileges suspended until a meeting is held with a DSS staff member to decide whether the privilege should be reinstated. On the third no-show, the instructor will be notified that testing privileges have been suspended for the remainder of the term, and he and the student will need to discuss other arrangements for testing.
- When students enter their designated testing area, all books and supplies, with the exception of a pen or pencil, must be left outside the area. Students can supply their own scratch paper, but DSS staff will look at it before it is allowed in the testing area. Students may not take cell phones, pagers or other personal electronic communication devices into the room. Hats or caps should be removed and left outside the room, and no food or beverages are allowed unless medically necessary. If students need to use a computer, they must use one in the DSS computer lab.
- Students must abide by the Code of Student Conduct with regard to maintaining academic integrity while taking a test. Cheating, using materials not authorized by the instructor, or leaving the testing area during a test without permission are all offenses that will be reported to the instructor. The instructor has the final say in

what disciplinary action should be imposed as a result of the violation of academic integrity.

- Once the student begins a test, it must be completed within the approved time frame. The student may not start the test, leave the testing area, and then return to complete the test. An exception to this is longer tests that have been divided into smaller units. A student can be given one unit to complete, and then turn it in to receive the next unit. Breaks can be given between each unit if the instructor permits this. Once a test or unit has been turned in, it cannot be given back to the student; therefore, it is important to review and check all work before submitting the test or unit to the proctor.
- Students must remind the instructor to deliver the test to DSS prior to the day the test is scheduled. This is especially necessary if the test needs to be enlarged or provided in an alternate format (Braille, on tape, or scanned).
- Students who need a reader, a scribe, or a specific computer program to take a test should schedule those services when scheduling the test time.

## **ACT Testing**

Chattanooga State offers the residual form of the ACT test for students seeking entrance into the Middle College High School Program or into college-level programs here on the campus. Accommodations may be approved for the residual ACT if the student provides documentation of a disability. Please see the section on documentation guidelines for more information on acceptable documentation.

Once the student has been determined to be eligible for accommodations on the residual ACT, a DSS staff member will complete a form stating what accommodations have been approved for the test, and the student will deliver that form to the Testing Center (S-261). It is the student's responsibility to schedule a date and time to take the residual ACT with the Testing Center. DSS does not administer the residual ACT.

Chattanooga State does not administer the national ACT. Any forms that must be completed to request accommodations on the national ACT must be completed by the special education teacher or school counselor at the student's home high school. DSS cannot complete paperwork on, or make arrangements for, accommodations on the national ACT.

## **GED Testing**

Forms to request accommodations for the GED are available in the Testing Center, but DSS cannot complete those forms for you. They must be completed by a qualified evaluator or medical practitioner. It is your responsibility to see that the forms are completed correctly by qualified individuals and submitted to the GED Examiner in the Testing Center. Approval for accommodations on the GED can be given only by the state GED Administrator in Nashville. Because it takes several weeks for the accommodation request to be processed, you should submit your forms at least two months before you plan to take the GED.

## **Industrial Technology Entrance Testing**

The Industrial Technology division requires an entrance test of all first-time students. This test consists of two parts: reading comprehension and basic arithmetic skills. Most students will take a computerized test (COMPASS) that is untimed; however, for students who need more accommodations than just extended time, a paper and pencil test is available (ASSET). DSS can provide additional accommodations for this test, provided appropriate documentation is submitted to the DSS office. Advance scheduling for the test is necessary to ensure that space and staff are available.