Geneva General Hospital's

Marion S. Whelan School of Practical Nursing

&

Finger Lakes Health College of Nursing & Health Sciences

Disability Handbook

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Overview of Disability Services

Geneva General Hospital (Marion S Whelan School of Practical Nursing and Finger Lakes Health College of Nursing & Health Sciences here after referred to as The College) is committed to ensuring that qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to access all programs, activities, and services offered by the College. Student Services within The College coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities by acting in partnership with students, faculty, and staff. We promote self-awareness, self-determination, and self-advocacy to enhance opportunities for academic success.

Student Services will assist students with disabilities in compliance with standards and regulations issued under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 (subpart E) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The College is a member of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) and the New York State Disability Services Council (NYSDSC).

Federal Law Governing Educational Access for Individuals with Disabilities: An Overview

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (the "ADA") prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who pursue educational opportunities, and require the provision of reasonable accommodations to such individuals to ensure equal access to programs, activities, and services. Per Section 504, "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability . . . shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, 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"

No qualified applicant will be denied admission to The College because of a disability, and no qualified student with a disability will be denied equal access to the College's programs, services, or activities because of their disability.

The educational access provisions of Section 504 and the ADA require that educational institutions be prepared to make appropriate academic adjustments and reasonable modifications to policies and practices to enable the full participation of students with disabilities in the same programs, services, and activities available to non-disabled students. Students with disabilities are entitled to the same rights, privileges, advantages, and opportunities enjoyed by non-disabled students. An applicant or student is "qualified" if he or she meets the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in the College's educational programs and activities.

In accordance with Section 504 and the ADA, it is the policy of The College to provide accessible programs, services, and activities and reasonable accommodations to any qualified student with a disability as defined by Section 504 and by the ADA. Documentation of disability is required for any disability that is not obvious.

The Disability Services Specialist within Student Services, who serves as the College's "Section 504 Coordinator," works to ensure students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to pursue an education based on their ability rather than their disability. The role of the Disability Services Specialist includes assisting students who need reasonable accommodation to participate equally in The College programs, activities, and services.

To receive accommodation in the educational setting, a student must have a "disability" as defined by law. The ADA and Section 504 define "disability" as:

> "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities" of the individual; having "a record of such an impairment"; or "being regarded as having such an impairment."

For purposes of this definition, "major life activities" include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

Minor or “transitory” impairments are not “disabilities.” A transitory impairment is an impairment expected to last six months or less. Likewise, impairments that do not “substantially limit” a major life activity do not meet the definition of a “disability.”

The College will make appropriate academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids available to enable students with documented (or obvious) disabilities to participate equally in all programs, services, and activities offered to students. Academic adjustments may include changes in the manner in which a specific course is conducted, allowing a service animal to accompany a student, or providing alternative methods of testing (such as extended time for exams, exams given in a setting to reduce distraction, or oral exams rather than written or computer-based exams). Auxiliary aids may include interpreters, note takers, or readers.

Students who are requesting academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or other accommodations are responsible for self-reporting their disability, and must provide required documentation to support the disability and the accommodations needed to afford equal opportunity to participate in the institution’s programs, activities, and services. Reasonable accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis, based on the individual student’s circumstances. The College will engage in an interactive process with the student to determine appropriate accommodations. Our goal is to create an accessible environment in which students become independent, are empowered to self-advocate, and develop their strengths.

Students with disabilities must meet the same academic standards as non-disabled students. Disability access laws do not require colleges or universities to lower academic standards or fundamentally alter the nature of the programs they provide. Reasonable accommodations are provided when needed to ensure equal access and equal opportunity to succeed; however, providing reasonable accommodations does not guarantee successful completion of courses or degree programs. All students, regardless of disability status, must meet the requirements and core performance standards of the program, with or without reasonable accommodations. In addition, all students must adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, must follow the Code of Ethics and demonstrate our Core Values, and must follow faculty directions and instructions.

Rights and Responsibilities Related to Students with Disabilities

Students' Rights include:

- The right not to be discriminated against or harassed because of their disability;
- Equal access to services, programs, and facilities at The College and equal opportunity to be successful;
- Receiving reasonable and appropriate accommodations and auxiliary aids and services determined on an individual basis through an interactive process and review of appropriate documentation;
- Confidentiality of information related to disability issues; and
- The ability to use the College's Grievance Policy to pursue any concerns regarding accommodation requests, equal access, or equal treatment. (See Grievance and Appeal Procedure section, below).

Students' Responsibilities include:

- Understanding their own disability;
- Self-identifying disability status to the Disability Services Specialist;
- Participating in an interactive process, including assisting in identifying appropriate and effective auxiliary aids or other specific accommodations;
- Providing disability documentation from a qualified professional, which meets the documentation requirements (See section on Documentation Requirements, below);
- Requesting necessary accommodations in advance of the need, or as soon as the need arises;
- Meeting The College academic standards;
- Complying with The College Code of Student Conduct, Core Values, and Code of Ethics, following faculty instructions and directives, and meeting core performance standards, with or without reasonable accommodations;
- Following the specific guidelines established for obtaining appropriate reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids or services;
- Notifying the Disability Services Specialist promptly of any concerns or difficulties in the receipt of accommodations;
- Notifying the Disability Services Specialist promptly when there is a change in status as a student in the school or a change in the need for accommodations;
- Scheduling testing times (if applicable) with Disability Services at 315-787-4591; and Accepting responsibility for their own success.

Disability Services Responsibilities include:

- Implementing the College's policies regarding access to programs, services, and activities by students and applicants with disabilities;

- Providing reasonable accommodations for students' disclosed disabilities so that students have equal access to courses, activities, programs, and services;
- Providing information on policies and procedures to students and applicants with disabilities;
- Providing appropriate supportive services to students, faculty, and staff;
- Meeting with students to discuss reasonable accommodation, possible accommodation options, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Requesting current documentation that adheres to the Documentation Requirements to verify the need for reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Meeting with the student to gain the student's input on their disability and their identification of possible effective accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services. In consultation with the student on an individual basis, mutually determine the accommodations, effective communications, and auxiliary aids and services that will be provided, giving primary consideration to the student's stated requests, as supported by appropriate documentation;
- Requesting that the student provide additional information from qualified professionals if documentation is insufficient for the accommodation(s) being requested;
- Denying an accommodation request and/or a request for auxiliary aids and services if the documentation fails to verify the need for the requested service or if documentation is not provided;
- In consultation with the Dean, declining an unreasonable accommodation request and/or request for auxiliary aids or services, or a request that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of the student or others (which cannot be eliminated through the provision of reasonable accommodation). An accommodation may be unreasonable if it would fundamentally alter an essential element of a course or program or would pose an undue hardship on the college;
- Providing the student with a letter of approved accommodations to present to faculty; and
- Maintaining The College Academic and Institutional standards and upholding The College Code of Student Conduct, Code of Ethics, and Core Values.

Faculty Members' rights include:

- Establishing course content and academic standards;
- Receiving from the student written notification prepared by the Disability Services Specialist of a student's need for accommodation. (Faculty and staff do not have the right to access disability documentation or to receive information from the College about a student's disability); and
- Raising with the Disability Services Specialist any concern about a particular accommodation request or its impact on the course's academic requirements or to health or safety.

Faculty Members' responsibilities include:

- Providing approved reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services consistently and in a timely manner;
- Working with the Disability Services Specialist, the Dean, and other faculty to facilitate recommended accommodations for the student, both within and outside of their classroom;
- Meeting with students who have provided a faculty notification letter to discuss requested accommodations and establish the procedure for providing accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services in the course;
- Maintaining confidentiality regarding disability issues;
- Referring unregistered students, who state they need accommodations, to the Disability Services Specialist;
- Referring students to the Disability Services Specialist if a need has been identified that will require professional evaluation for accommodations;
- Contacting the Disability Services Specialist for consultation regarding students with disabilities and accommodation concerns;
- Collaborating with the Disability Services Specialist if they feel the accommodations fundamentally alter the objectives of the course or pose a direct threat to health or safety; and
- Upholding The College Code of Student Conduct, Code of Ethics, and Core Values in a fair and consistent manner with all students.

Documentation Requirements

Documentation and Accommodation Link

Students who wish to receive accommodations must make an appointment to meet with the Disability Services Specialist (ph. 315-787-4591) initially, and at the beginning of each semester thereafter. It is a student's responsibility to self-disclose their disability confidentially and voluntarily, and to self-advocate for their accommodations. Students are strongly encouraged to identify their disability before they begin classes at the College.

Each student's accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis after an interactive discussion with the Disability Services Specialist and a review of supporting current documentation, completed by an appropriately credentialed and trained professional. (See the General Documentation Guidelines and requirements specific to each type of impairment, set out below). The College reserves the right to request re-evaluation if the documentation the student provides is outdated or insufficient for proper analysis of academic needs. The College also reserves the right to request re-evaluation or updated documentation if the student's disability is one that, by its nature, is subject to frequent change. It is the student's responsibility to bear the cost of needed evaluations and testing.

Different laws apply at the college level than at the elementary and secondary school level, and therefore an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan does not carry over to the college level. A student seeking accommodation must provide documentation acceptable at the college level, showing the current state of the student's impairment and its impact on the student's ability to function in a postsecondary academic environment. An evaluation report from an appropriate professional that was used to develop an IEP or Section 504 Plan may or may not meet the requirements of this policy.

If a student has never had accommodations in the past but feel they are a candidate for accommodations, they must register with the Disability Services Specialist and obtain the requirements for testing/documentation. Accommodations will not be granted without proper documentation unless the disability (and resulting need for accommodation) is obvious.

Accommodations are not retroactive. Therefore, students are advised to request accommodations before the semester begins or as early in the semester as possible. Students also must review their documentation and accommodations with the Disability Services Specialist before the start of each semester in order to receive accommodations for the current semester. The purpose of this requirement is to evaluate whether there have been any changes since the previous accommodations were granted, whether accommodations are still necessary, or whether different or additional accommodations may be needed. New documentation does not need to be provided for this semester review unless the student's situation has changed. When the student is requesting an accommodation that is not supported by the documentation, the College reserves the right to request that the student provide appropriate documentation to support the requested accommodation. At times, it may be helpful or necessary for the Disability Services Specialist

to speak to the professional providing the documentation to clarify the student's disability-related needs. The College will not speak with the professional without written permission from the student.

General Documentation Guidelines:

A determination of disability is made on an individualized case-by-case basis. A student must demonstrate, through valid testing and assessment performed by a qualified professional, that he or she has an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Factors to be considered include the nature and severity of the impairment; the duration of the impairment; and the permanent or long-term impact of the impairment. To make this determination, all documentation must:

1. Be completed by a professional qualified by licensure, specific training, and experience to assess the type of disability at issue. Documentation must be submitted on the professional's letterhead, containing the professional's name, title, and professional credentials along with the location of his/her place of employment or practice.
    i. **Note:** Documentation submitted on a prescription pad will not be accepted.
2. Identify the student's impairment(s), including severity and predicted course.
    i. **Note:** Documentation with terms like "individual learning style," "academic problems," "emotional problems," or "test anxiety" do not substantiate a disability and will not be accepted.
3. Identify and describe the procedures, assessments, and/or testing used to diagnose or identify the condition(s).
4. Describe the extent and degree to which the condition interferes with one or more major life activities.
5. Describe how the condition affects the student's ability to function in the postsecondary academic setting.
6. Identify any accommodations that the professional believes are necessary to provide the student equal access to The College programs, activities, and services and the rationale for each recommended accommodation.
7. Be recent. This requirement is meant to ensure that the condition described in the documentation and its effects on the student are reasonably current. Although the acceptable date of the documentation may vary depending on the impairment and the circumstances (*e.g.*, whether the student was a child or an adult when the evaluation was done, whether the nature of the impairment is one that is reasonably constant or may vary with changes in medication or other treatment, etc.), documentation generally must be completed within three (3) years of the date submitted to the

College. (See below for shorter time frames applicable to certain types of impairments). If the student's documentation otherwise meets the requirements of this policy but is more than three (3) years old, the student will be granted provisional accommodations for one semester only, to give the student the opportunity to obtain updated documentation.

If the condition and/or its impact changes during the student's course of study, it is the student's responsibility to provide updated documentation.

Students who seeking accommodation for more than one disability must provide the necessary documentation for each impairment and the accommodation(s) requested related to that impairment.

Additional Documentation Requirements

Additional documentation requirements, as outlined below, are specific to the disability for which the student is seeking accommodations and should be included. Qualifications for evaluators also are described below. These requirements reflect the standards recommended by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

1. Evaluator Qualifications: a professional who has had comprehensive training concerning the specific disability and who is trained in differential diagnosis and the full range of psychiatric disorders, with direct expertise with adolescent and adult populations – typically a licensed neuropsychologist, clinical psychologist, educational psychologist, or psychiatrist, as well as medical doctors with specific relevant training.

2. Recommended Documentation to include:
    a. evidence of early impairment,
    b. evidence of current impairment,
    c. an in-person interview including self-reported information and third-party information pertaining to:
        i. any significant developmental history,
        ii. family history of ADHD or other educational, learning, or related difficulty,
        iii. relevant medication and medical history,
        iv. academic history,
        v. review of previous psychoeducational test reports to determine whether a pattern of strengths or weaknesses supports attention or learning problems,
    d. description of any relevant employment history,
    e. description of current functional limitations pertaining to a postsecondary educational setting,
    f. documentation that other alternative diagnoses have been ruled out,

g. discussion of neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessments administered to determine the current impact of the disorder on the student's ability to function in a postsecondary academic setting along with the scores and deviation from the norm,
h. specific diagnosis as per the DSM-IV-TR manual of the American Psychiatric Association,
i. whether the student was evaluated while on medication, and whether or not the prescribed medication produced a positive result in the student's performance,
j. any current prescribed medications, dosages, and schedules that may influence the types of accommodations provided, including any possible side effects,
k. an integrated summary, interpreting and assessing the information and test results obtained by the professional, and
l. a description of the specific accommodation currently needed and how the accommodation will assist with the effects of the current impairment.

Learning Disabilities (LD)

1. Evaluator Qualifications: a professional with comprehensive specialized training and experience in differential diagnosis and the assessment of learning problems in adolescents or adults – typically a clinical psychologist, educational psychologist, or neuropsychologist.

2. Recommended Documentation to include:
    a. pertinent background information, including a description of the presenting problem(s), any significant developmental, medical, psychosocial and/or employment history, family history (including primary language in the home and the student's current level of English fluency), and discussion of any other relevant conditions,
    b. a complete assessment of intellectual functioning/aptitude using the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS III); The Woodcock Johnson III: Tests of Cognitive Ability; or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fifth Edition,

        i. **Note**: The Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT2), the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI) and the Slosson Intelligence Test - Revised are NOT comprehensive measures and therefore are not suitable for use in the initial diagnosis of a learning disability.

    c. a comprehensive academic achievement battery that measures current levels of functioning in reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics, and oral and written language (*e.g.*, Woodcock-Johnson III: Tests of Achievement, Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II (WIAT II), Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK), Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA), or specific achievement tests - Test of Written Language-3 (TOWL-3), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised/NU, Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test, Nelson-Denny). All standard scores, standard deviations, and percentiles must be reported for those subtests administered,

i. **Note**: The Wide Range Achievement Test-3 (WRAT-3) and the Wide Range Achievement Test-4 are NOT comprehensive measures of achievement and are therefore not suitable unless combined with other measures as appropriate.

d. an assessment of specific areas of information processing (*e.g.*, short- and long-term memory, sequential memory, sequential and simultaneous processing, auditory and visual perception/processing, processing speed, working memory, motor ability),
e. a diagnosis of a specific learning disability, including ruling out alternative diagnoses or explanations,

i. **Note:** Individual "learning styles," "learning differences," "academic problems," "slow learner," and "test difficulty" or "test anxiety," in and of themselves, do not constitute a learning disability.

f. an indication of how patterns in the student's cognitive ability, achievement, and information processing indicate the presence of a learning disability,
g. an integrated summary, interpreting and assessing the information and test results obtained by the professional, including the substantial limitations on major life activities posed by the disability and how those limitations affect the student's functioning in a postsecondary academic environment, and
h. a description of the specific accommodation currently needed and how the accommodation will assist with the effects of the current impairment.

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)/Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI))

1. Evaluator Qualifications: a professional who has undergone comprehensive training and has relevant experience in the assessment of ABI/TBI in adolescents and/or adults (*e.g.*, neuropsychologists, educational psychologists, or clinical psychologists with relevant training).

2. Time Frame: For an acquired/traumatic brain injury, an update should be done every two (2) years due to the changing nature of the disability.

3. Recommended Documentation to include:
   a a neuropsychological evaluation containing assessments of intellectual, conceptual, and cognitive competence; academic skills; personality status; motor facility of all extremities; sensory, perceptual, and processing efficiency; visual, auditory, and tactile facility; speech, language, and communication ability; and evaluation of memory and attention,
   b utilization of particular evaluation techniques is at the discretion of the evaluator. Measures, such as the following, will be expected to appear in the selected battery: Bender-Gestalt, Halstead Reitain Battery (or selected parts); Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude - 4 (DTLA-4) or Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude - Adult (DTLA-A); Luria Nebraska Battery (or selected parts); Peabody Individual

Achievement Test-R/NU (or other adult individual achievement tests); Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests- Revised/NU; Woodcock-Johnson III; and the Spache Written Language Assessment,

c. an in-person interview, including a description of the presenting problem(s); developmental, medical, psychosocial, and employment histories; family history (including primary language of the home and the student's current level of English fluency); and a discussion of dual diagnosis where indicated, and
d. An integrated summary that:
    i. identifies executive functioning deficits expected to impact postsecondary educational performance and appropriate accommodations;
    ii. describes the impact of the student's limitations specifically on learning (*e.g.*, reading, math, written and oral expression);
    iii. identifies any other concerns arising from the impairment that may impact the student's ability to successfully navigate the postsecondary education environment (*e.g.*, interacting with others); and
    iv. states how the effects of the brain injury are resolved by the recommended accommodations.

Autism Spectrum Disorders/Asperger's Syndrome

1. Evaluator Qualifications: Professionals who have undergone comprehensive training in diagnosing autism spectrum disorders in adolescents and adults and who has at least 5 years' experience in the field – typically psychiatrists, neuropsychiatrists, psychologists, and neurologists.

2. Recommended Documentation to include:
    a. a comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation accompanied by a clinical statement reviewing history and current symptoms. The comprehensive diagnostic evaluation should include the following:
        i. complete medical, family, and developmental history,
        ii. comprehensive psychological or neuropsychological examination, conducted within the last 3 years, including a detailed description of the student's current cognitive functions as it impacts the ability to function in a postsecondary academic setting,
        iii. academic testing, including standardized achievement tests (including standard scores) and a review of the student's academic record,
        iv. current level of social/emotional functioning,
        v. integrated narrative summary including the impact of the symptoms of the condition on learning and/or communicating, and the student's ability to function in a postsecondary academic setting, including executive functioning impairments as they relate to postsecondary education.
    b. an in-person interview, including a description of the presenting problem(s), including any significant developmental, medical, psychosocial, and employment history, family history, and discussion of any dual diagnoses, if relevant, and the student's self-report of his/her own present functioning and abilities,
    c. a comprehensive interview with the student's parents or other knowledgeable informants,

d. prescribed medications, dosages, and schedules that may influence the learning environment, including any possible side effects,
e. supplemental documentation, as appropriate, by any allied health professional, such as speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, or statements from therapists or other treating professionals, and
f. a description of the specific accommodation(s) needed and how the accommodation(s) will assist with the effects of the current impairment.

Psychiatric Disorders

1. Evaluator Qualifications: Professionals trained in differential diagnosis and the full range of psychiatric conditions, who have direct experience with adolescents and adults: includes licensed clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, relevantly trained medical doctors, and Psychiatric Advanced Practice Registered Nurses.

2. Time Frame: Due to the changing nature of this type of disorder, the evaluation should have been completed within the preceding six (6) months.

3. Recommended Documentation to include:
   a. an in-person interview including the presenting problem(s), any significant developmental, medical, psychosocial and employment history, family history, and a discussion of dual diagnosis where indicated,
   b. a specific current diagnosis per the DSM-IV-TR manual of the American Psychiatric Association,

      Note: "Emotional disturbance" is not a disability at the postsecondary level. A specific diagnosis, and not just a listing of current symptoms, is required to make a determination of disability.

   c. current symptoms on which the diagnosis was based, including the nature, frequency, and severity of each symptom,
   d. primary and secondary Axis I and Axis II diagnoses. A measure of the student's functioning using the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) Scale is highly recommended, along with the student's general, highest, and lowest GAF scores and other relevant details concerning the student's performance,
   e. current prescribed medications, dosages, and schedules that may influence the learning environment and accommodations, including any possible side effects,
   f. an indication whether the student was evaluated while on medication, and if so, the effect of medication on the assessment and the student's functioning, and
   g. an integrated summary, including:
      i. a description of the substantial limitations to major life activities posed by the condition,
      ii. the extent to which these limitations affect the student's functioning in the postsecondary academic environment,
      iii. suggestions as to how the specific effects of the condition may be accommodated, and
      iv. a description of how the proposed accommodation(s) will assist with the effects of the current impairment.

Physical Disabilities (including Mobility, Dexterity, and Chronic Health-Related Impairments)

1. Evaluator Qualifications: a medical doctor, or, where permitted by licensure, a physician assistant or advance practice registered nurse with the necessary training and experience.

2. Recommended Documentation to include:
    a. identification of the disabling condition(s),
    b. assessment of the functionally limiting manifestations of the condition(s) for which accommodations are being requested,
    c. degree and range of functioning for a chronic or progressive condition,
    d. current prescribed medications, dosages, and schedules that may influence the types of accommodations provided, including possible side effects, and
    e. suggestions as to how the functionally limiting manifestations of the disabling condition may be accommodated.

Hearing Impairment (Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or other Hearing Impairment)

1. Evaluator Qualifications: an otorhinolaryngologist, otologist, or licensed audiologist.

2. Recommended Documentation to include:
    a. an audiological evaluation and/or audiogram administered by an otorhinolaryngologist, otologist, or licensed audiologist to identify the diagnosis/extent of hearing impairment,
    b. an interpretation of the functional implications of the diagnostic data and hearing aid evaluation, when appropriate.
    c. suggestions on how the functionally limiting manifestations of the disabling condition(s) may be accommodated. If the audiological report does not include recommendations for accommodations, an audiologist should be consulted – an educational audiologist is preferable.
    d. the age of acceptable documentation depends on whether the disabling condition is static or changing; this information must be included in the documentation. The College reserves the right to request an updated evaluation if the condition is changing and the conditions described in the documentation appear outdated.

Vision Impairment (Blind, Low Vision, or other Vision Impairment)

1. Evaluator Qualifications: a licensed ophthalmologist.

2. Recommended Documentation to include:
    a. an ocular assessment or evaluation identifying the diagnosis/extent of vision impairment,
    b. a low-vision evaluation of residual visual function, when appropriate, and
    c. suggestions as to how the functionally limiting manifestations of the disabling condition(s) may be accommodated.

Requesting Accommodations

Policy

1. Students attending college must self-identify as an individual with a disability and must self-advocate for accommodations before the semester begins or as early as possible in the semester. Accommodations are not retroactive. Therefore, it is in the student's interest to request any needed accommodations as soon as possible in order to have the maximum opportunity for equal access.
2. The accommodation process includes three (3) steps:
    a The student confidentially self-identifies to the Disability Services Specialist as a student with a disability;
    b The student submits the appropriate recent documentation supporting the disability and the need for accommodation (in most instances, the documentation must have been completed within 3 years; some conditions require more recent documentation); and
    c The student and the Disability Services Specialist engage in an interactive process where the student discusses their disability-related needs, including identifying auxiliary aids that may be effective, and makes a specific request for accommodation.
3. If a student has documentation that is older than is generally permitted under the Documentation Requirements, and the documentation includes all of the relevant information necessary to make accommodation decisions, provisional accommodations may be granted for one semester only, while the student obtains an updated evaluation by a qualified professional.
4. All accommodations that are reasonable and supported by appropriate documentation will be considered; requests for accommodations that fundamentally alter the nature of a course or program, that pose a direct threat to health or safety (of the student or others, including patients) that cannot be eliminated through the provision of reasonable accommodation, or that impose an undue hardship on the College will be declined.
5. Accommodations are either approved or declined after careful consideration and evaluation of the documentation, student self-report, and ability to provide the requested accommodation consistent with program requirements. There may be certain circumstances where alternative accommodations may be offered as part of the interactive process.
6. If an accommodation is accepted, the student will receive a letter stating the accommodations that are approved to give to their instructors.
    a. If an accommodation is declined, the student will be provided with a rationale and documentation will be placed in the student's file. The student will have the opportunity to seek review of this decision, if desired.
7. All student records will be kept confidential and only shared with written permission from the student except where allowed by FERPA and its implementing regulations.

8. If at any time the student feels that reasonable academic accommodations were not fulfilled in a way that is satisfactory to a student with a disability, the student has a right to file a grievance. (See Grievance and Appeal Procedure section, below).

Procedure

***New Incoming Students must**:*

1. Complete the initial intake form. 2023-2025 ADA Intake Form New Student Request
2. Make an appointment with the Disability Services Specialist at 315-787-4591.
    a. Make appointments before the start of the first semester or as soon as possible after the semester starts to assure that accommodations are able to be provided in a timely manner.

   Bring to the initial appointment the following documents:
    a. Completed intake form.
    b. Appropriate documentation from a qualified evaluator (see Documentation Requirements section).
3. Discuss with the Disability Services Specialist how their disability affects them in an academic setting, any accommodations they had previously and how those accommodations helped them, and the current request for accommodations. Be prepared to discuss possible alternative accommodations.
4. Use the Grievance and Appeal Procedure to assure the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints if they feel the College has violated the ADA or Section 504, including if the student feels they have been retaliated against.

Returning or Current Students Who Identify a Possible Need for Accommodations must:

1. Complete the initial intake form. 2023-2025 ADA Intake Form Existing Students
2. Make an appointment with the Disability Services Specialist 315-787-4591.
    a. Make appointments at the beginning of the semester or as soon as possible after the semester starts to assure that accommodations are able to be provided in a timely manner.
3. Bring to the initial appointment the following documents:
    a. Completed intake form.
    b. Appropriate documentation from a qualified evaluator, if available. (See Documentation Requirements section).
        i. If documentation does not exist, the Disability Services Specialist will provide guidance.
4. Discuss with the Disability Services Specialist how their disability affects them in an academic setting; any accommodations they had previously and how those accommodations helped them; and the current request for accommodations. Be prepared to discuss possible alternative accommodations.

5. Use the Grievance and Appeal Procedure to assure the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints if they feel the college has violated the ADA or Section 504, including if the student feels they have been retaliated against.

The Disability Services Specialist will:

1. Facilitate an open discussion related to the student's disability and requested accommodations.
2. Determine the accommodations that will be provided after receiving the appropriate documentation.
    a. Provide for provisional accommodations for one (1) semester in situations where the student provides documentation that is not current to give the student time for a re-evaluation.
3. Furnish the student with a letter that the student will provide to their instructors listing the approved accommodations.
4. Keep files and other documentation confidential.
5. If the need arises, obtain the student's written permission to share information with outside parties or to obtain additional information from providers/evaluators.
6. Provide guidance to the student regarding evaluations and required documentation as needed.

Grievance and Appeal Procedure

The College believes in the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints by students with disabilities concerning any issue of fair treatment, equal access, or the provision of reasonable accommodation. Any student who believes the College has violated the ADA or Section 504, including complaints alleging retaliation for having complained of or opposed a violation of the ADA or Section 504, may use this Grievance and Appeal Procedure.

Whenever possible, the student should attempt to resolve the complaint with the respective person(s) involved. However, a formal grievance can be made at any time, using the Grievance policy outlined in the Student Handbook. A formal grievance will be investigated promptly and a final determination issued for the resolution of the grievance. If a student is dissatisfied with the resolution of the grievance, the student may appeal the decision. The appeal process is contained in the Grievance policy.

At any time, a student may file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education. We ask, however, that you consider giving us the opportunity to try to resolve the issue through our internal grievance process, as the College is committed to working with students to ensure equal access and fair treatment. If a student should desire to file a complaint with OCR, however, information is available on the following website that explains how to file online, or via mail or e-mail:
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html

Student Records and Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the use and disclosure of educational records containing personally identifiable information pertaining to students, including those with a disability. The College follows the guidelines in FERPA. Educational records containing disability information are kept confidential and are kept in a secure, locked file. This includes the Intake Form; any medical and psychological documentation (including IEP and Section 504 plans from high school); correspondence from doctors or other appropriate professionals; notes from instructors, counselors, advisors, Student Services staff, etc. Federal law provides for disclosure of educational records without the student's consent in specific circumstances, such as to another educational institution if the student seeks to enroll or transfer there, to comply with a court order or lawful subpoena, in connection with a health or safety emergency, to the victim if the student is alleged to be the perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense, or to other school officials, including instructors, if disclosure to a school official is justified for legitimate educational reasons.

If you discontinue your enrollment at The College, you may contact the Disability Services Specialist to request a copy of your Disability Services file. The student must sign a Documentation Release form in order to receive the contents of his or her Disability Services file.

Service Animals

Students with disabilities who use service animals may have the service animal with them in all aspects of the College's courses, programs, and services, subject to the requirements outlined below.

A service animal is not a pet or companion; the animal must be specifically trained to assist an individual with a disability by performing specific tasks. As defined by federal regulation, a "service animal" is:

> any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

If an animal meets this definition, it is considered a "service animal" regardless of whether it has been certified by a training program. A doctor's note does not turn an animal into a service animal.

Students who request to have a service animal must contact the Disability Services Specialist **before** the animal comes to campus. If there is any question whether an animal is a service animal, a decision will be made in consultation with the Disability Services Specialist and/or the Dean.

The only questions a student may be asked regarding the service animal are:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability? (unless the disability is obvious)
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

No proof or certification of training is required.

Requirements of service animals and the student handler:

- Animals must be licensed in accordance with any and all State and local laws/ordinances; *i.e.*, they must have had all vaccines in accordance with state and local laws and the student must provide proof of vaccination and licensure.
- Animals must be in good health.
- Animals must be housebroken.
- The student handler must be in full control of the animal at all times. This includes physical control of the animal through a leash or other means.
- The student handler must also keep the environment clean and dispose of all animal waste sanitarily.

If a service animal is disruptive or aggressive, the student may be asked to remove the animal from the College. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the student may be told not to bring the animal into any facility until the student takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior. This mitigation may include muzzling a barking dog, or refresher training for the animal and/or student handler.

Companion Animals/Emotional Support Animals

A companion animal, comfort animal, or emotional support animal is ***not*** a "service animal." There is no right to have a pet, a companion/comfort animal, or an emotional support animal in an educational setting. Laws protecting service animals do not cover "companion animals" or "emotional support" animals.

Federal regulation state that "the . . . provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of" the definition of a "service animal." Therefore, companion animals, comfort animals, or emotional support animals may not accompany a person (with or without a disability) into the classroom or specific areas where other students, faculty, or staff frequent.