

NUMBER: SA 6.02

SECTION: Division of Student Affairs

SUBJECT: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

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REVISED:

Policy for: USC Upstate
Procedure for: USC Upstate
Authorized by: Dr. T. Moore
Issued by: Disability Services

I. Policy

The provision of access to a diverse population is inherent in the mission of the University of South Carolina Upstate. In accordance with Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the 2008 Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act, USC Upstate ensures that no otherwise qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded in participation in, be denied the benefits of; or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from Federal assistance. USC Upstate Disability Services staff members work to ensure that all educational programming, curricula, facilities, resources and services are made available to all students.

Since the nature and severity of disability may vary considerably, the recommended support services and accommodations may only be applicable when they are appropriate to the needs of the individual with a disability. Accommodations are recommended on a case-by-case basis in consideration with the history and impact of the disability and the professional judgment of the Disability Services staff.

A. Definition of a disability

1. The University of South Carolina Upstate uses as a guide the federal definition of a disability (as stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008), which states that a disability is, “A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as walking, talking, breathing, learning, thinking, seeing, listening, performing manual tasks, caring for oneself, etc.; A record of a

physical or mental impairment substantially limiting a major life activity, or:
Being regarded as having a substantially limiting physical or mental impairment.

2. Diagnosis of a disability should be made in accordance with standards of the medical, psychological, and special education professions.

B. Admission of Students with Disabilities

1. Students with disabilities apply and are considered for admission to the university in the same manner as any other applicant and must meet the same admission standards. Applicants may submit scores from a nonstandard (e.g. untimed) administration of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or Miller Analogies Test (MAT) to be used in evaluation of credentials for admission.
2. Upon acceptance, students with disabilities may gain access to accommodations by self-identifying with the office of Disability Services. Students must schedule an initial intake appointment with a DS staff member and provide documentation indicating a disability from a qualified medical professional. Documentation will be reviewed based on guidelines determined by the office of Disability Services.
3. Students already enrolled at the University of South Carolina Upstate who suspect that they have a disability, or who have not yet registered with Disability Services, may seek assistance from Disability Services for a referral to an appropriate clinician for assessment. All resultant supporting documentation must be submitted to Disability Services for verification of disability status.

II. Procedures

A. Accessing Accommodations

1. Students must self-identify to Disability Services as a student with a disability.
2. Students must complete an initial intake appointment with a Disability Services staff member to discuss the nature and impact of their disability on the academic environment and determine appropriate accommodations.
3. Students must provide appropriate documentation that indicates a qualifying disability.
4. Students must meet with a DS staff member at the beginning of each subsequent semester to assess the effectiveness of past accommodations, discuss any changes

in their accommodation plan, adapt accommodations to their current class schedule and request accommodation letters for the current semester.

5. Students must pick up accommodation letters from the office of Disability Services and disseminate them to each of their professors. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss the accommodation plan with each professor when the letters are presented.
6. Accommodations will be implemented only after the student has presented the accommodation letter to the professor. Accommodations will not be authorized on a retroactive basis.
7. Students must follow Disability Services' specific procedures for accessing accommodations.

B. Recommended Program Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

1. Under University policy, the office of Disability Services is the only office that can evaluate documentation, make the determination of appropriate accommodations, and advise university programs of the implementation of approved accommodations.
2. Disability Services may recommend the following programmatic accommodations when appropriate:
 - a. Allow students with disabilities to take a reduced course load of nine semester hours or less for the fall or spring semester with supplemented summer credits to be considered Full Time Equivalency (FTE) with regard to access to university residence halls and/or eligibility for financial aid.
 - b. Allow students with disabilities to audit a course before taking it for academic credit, upon approval of the instructor.
 - c. Allow students with disabilities to take an *Incomplete* in a course due to a disability-related need for additional time, upon approval of the instructor.
 - d. Allow students with disabilities to *withdraw from a course without grade penalty*, upon approval of Disability Services, the instructor, and the Dean of the student's major program of study.
 - e. Allow students with disabilities *Priority Registration* to help ensure a class schedule that meets specific disability-related needs.

The preceding list is not meant to be exhaustive and provides examples of options that may be available. These accommodations are neither appropriate nor indicated for all students with disabilities.

C. Recommended Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

1. Under university policy, the office of Disability Services is the only office that can evaluate documentation, make the determination of appropriate accommodations, and advise university programs of the implementation of approved accommodations in the classroom environment.
2. It is recommended that instructors consult with the office of Disability Services staff concerning the specific needs of individual students with disabilities. The following classroom accommodations may be available to students with disabilities, at the recommendation of Disability Services:
 - a. Use of tape recorders for class capture and to assist with note-taking.
 - b. Volunteer note-taking services to supplement note-taking efforts.
 - c. Alternative test administration procedures such as extra time to complete tests, the use of a reader or scribe, or permission to take tests in a separate room with a proctor.
 - d. Use of a laptop or word processor for essay or short-answer sections of tests and exams.
 - e. Assignments modified in form (not substance, and not to fundamentally alter the nature of the assignment).
 - f. Allowance of additional absences under the agreement between student and instructor in the completed Record of Negotiation.
 - g. Classroom materials in accessible alternative format, including enlarged print, Braille, audio books, or electronic text.

The preceding list is not meant to be exhaustive and provides examples of options that may be available. These accommodations are neither appropriate nor indicated for all students with disabilities.

(This policy is adapted from USC Columbia Campus Policy – Support Services and Accommodations for Students with Diagnosed Disabilities, BUSF 6.02)