



Working with Students with Disabilities: A Handbook for Faculty and Staff

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This handbook is also available on the SDRC website. Due to necessary revisions that may occur throughout the academic year, this issue may become outdated without notification.

Therefore, the most current version may be obtained on the website.

This handbook is available in alternate formats upon request.

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INTRODUCTION

Georgia College & State University strives to assure accessibility of all programs, services, and activities for students. This handbook is made available to help GC faculty and staff understand our respective rights and responsibilities under federal laws that prohibit discrimination based on disability. Please contact the Student Disability Resource Center for further information.

POSTSECONDARY DISABILITY LAW

Individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal access to postsecondary programs. There are three laws that protect persons with disabilities in postsecondary education: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. These laws define an individual with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment; has a history of impairment; or is believed to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, speaking, seeing, hearing, breathing, walking, performing manual tasks, or performing self-care tasks.

The Rehabilitation Act (1973)

Title V of The Rehabilitation Act is generally regarded as the first civil rights legislation on the national level for people with disabilities. Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act is a program access statute. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity offered by an entity or institution receiving federal funds. Section 504 states (as amended):

No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States...shall, solely on the basis of disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal financial assistance.

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) (1990)

The ADA is a federal civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. There are four main sections of the law: employment, government, public accommodations, and telecommunications. The ADA provides additional protection for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA is designed to remove barriers, which prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities that are available to persons without disabilities.

Postsecondary institutions are covered in many ways under the ADA. Employment is addressed by Title I, accessibility provided by public entities in Title II, accessibility provided by private entities in Title III, telecommunications in Title IV, and miscellaneous items in Title V.

The ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) (2008)

The ADAAA was passed by Congress with the stated intent of restoring some of the original purpose of the ADA, specifically overturning a series of Supreme Court

decisions which had put significant limits on the 1990 law. The ADAAA broadened the definition of the disability by:

- Expanding the definition of “major life activities” to include all major bodily systems such as digestion, respiratory, endocrine system, etc, and activities such as thinking and working
- Redefining who is “regarded as” having a disability
- Modifying the definition of “substantially limits”
- Specifying that “disability” includes impairments that are episodic or in remission, if they substantially limit a major life activity when active
- Prohibiting consideration of ameliorative effects of mitigating measures in most situations

The ADAAA also clarified those individuals who meet only the “regarded as” prong of the disability definition are not entitled to accommodation. The passage of the new legislation required many companies and agencies to re-examine their disability policies.

Reasonable Accommodations

Federal disability laws call for provision of reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that academic requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability, against a qualified applicant or student. Accommodations will be provided based on the specific request and disability documentation provided to the university. Accommodations will not be provided retroactively. A request may be deemed “unreasonable” if it:

1. Creates a direct threat to the health or safety of others
2. Causes a substantial change in an essential element or a substantial alteration in the manner in which the university provides a program or service
3. Causes undue financial or administrative burden

BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY

The Policy Manual of the Board of Regents ([BoR Policy 4.1.5, Students with Disabilities](#)) states:

The USG is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all students. USG institutions offer students with disabilities a variety of services and accommodations to ensure that both facilities and programs are accessible. The information provided on working with students with disabilities is an overview of the resources available and the policies and procedures in place that are intended to facilitate accessibility and academic success.

All institutions of the USG shall adopt the common criteria for documenting disabilities and employ a common methodology for providing services to students with diagnosed disabilities.

The criteria for documenting disabilities can be found in [Appendix D](#). Specific documentation guidelines for nine disability categories are described in [Appendix E](#).

STUDENT DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

The Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) serves as the central contact point for students with permanent disabilities. The office strives to ensure equal access to all services, classes, and events for students with disabilities. The SDRC is considered the primary office on campus with specialized knowledge and experience in disability issues, and serves as the central location for maintaining confidential disability files.

The SDRC is located in Russell Library, Room 109. The SDRC is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The SDRC seeks to assist students with disabilities as they participate in the “liberal arts experience”. A liberal arts curriculum teaches students how to critically assess the world around them. There is no more valuable skill than to be able to gather facts and opinions, process them, and make your own educated decisions. It’s a skill that gives students an advantage at any job, enhances relationships, and leaves you personally fulfilled throughout your lifetime. The SDRC realizes this experience in the following ways:

- 1) Provides and coordinates direct services to students with disabilities. Services are individualized to meet the needs of students, based on documentation and professional judgment.
- 2) Provides consultation for staff, faculty and administrators to increase awareness of the needs of individuals with disabilities and to reduce programmatic, attitudinal and physical barriers.
- 3) Provides support and information for student and faculty/staff development. The SDRC encourages students, staff and faculty to increase knowledge of effective means of accommodation without altering essential functions or purposes of a program or course. “Reasonable” accommodations should create equal opportunity to participate, learn, and express what has been learned.

In all its activities, the SDRC seeks to establish and maintain a balance of rights and responsibilities for both students with disabilities and the University. Furthermore, the SDRC seeks to develop and use non-adversarial methods to resolve problems of accessibility and accommodation.

SELF-DISCLOSURE

Individuals must decide for themselves whether they choose to self-disclose a disability and/or request accommodation under 504/ADA/ADAAA. There may be times when an individual may choose not to self-disclose when they enroll at the University, or, even after disclosure, may decide not to request accommodations. This is the individual’s decision and will be respected. Students may disclose/request at a later time. Accommodations are not retroactive. The University is not responsible for accommodating undisclosed disabilities.

Students wishing to self-disclose a disability and/or request accommodations should do so through the SDRC. Disclosure of a disability or the request for an accommodation

from other offices may appropriately trigger a referral to the SDRC, but the obligation for accommodation begins when the student contacts the SDRC, and provides a [Request for Services and appropriate documentation](#).

If a student approaches a faculty member about accommodations and does not have an accommodation letter, the faculty member should refer the student to the SDRC. Severe and/or obvious disabilities may need to be accommodated before the process is complete (i.e. accessible desk for a student using a wheelchair).

ELIGIBILITY AND DOCUMENTATION

The determination of eligibility will be made by the SDRC based on documentation of disability. Under the 504/ADA, an individual with a disability is defined as “having a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities.” Documentation serves two primary purposes: 1) Protection from discrimination, and 2) Determination of accommodations to which an individual may be entitled. Documentation to establish the former may be more brief and serves only to assure that an individual will not be excluded, restricted or harassed based on perceptions or stereotypes. Documentation intended to support the need for accommodations must not only provide evidence of a disability, but also provide sufficient information regarding the functional impact of that disability.

The University System of Georgia has developed documentation guidelines that are found on the SDRC website (<http://www.gcsu.edu/disability/accessing>). Students are responsible for providing documentation as outlined by the University System of Georgia Documentation Policy. The Policy addresses qualifications of the professionals, recency of the documentation, and required information.

The University requires a clear and specific diagnosis; however, a diagnosis alone is not enough to require accommodations/auxiliary aids. Documentation must address the functional limitations – the substantial impact on major life functions - while attending the University. Please note that a high school IEP or 504 Plan alone is usually not sufficient documentation.

Students should also be aware that approval for accommodations does not assure the sufficiency of that same documentation for transfer to another institution, or for the standards of various professional and graduate school testing agencies. All documentation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If the documentation provided is deemed insufficient for determination of disability and reasonable accommodations, additional documentation will be requested. The University has no responsibility for the cost of obtaining such documentation. If documentation is acceptable, but the University wishes to obtain a second opinion, the University reserves the right to send the documentation to the Regent’s Center for Learning Disorder for further evaluation. Final determination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations rests with the University.

When a Request for Services and documentation is received from a student/parent, the SDRC will respond by contacting the student within two weeks to acknowledge receipt. If documentation is received from a third party (e.g., high school, doctor, junior college), the documentation will be kept on file until a Request for Services is received. After such receipt the documentation will be reviewed for sufficiency and notice will be sent to the student for a face-to-face appointment.

Students should keep all original documents, including school records and medical reports, providing the SDRC office with copies. Documentation on prospective students who then fail to enroll will be kept for a minimum of one year. SDRC files on enrolled students are kept for a minimum five years after last contact.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Disability documentation and the records related to the SDRC services shall be considered confidential and shall be shared with others within the University only in very restricted circumstances. The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows for extremely limited sharing of information on an “academic need-to-know” basis.

Students should be aware that their information from their SDRC file may be shared with select University officials in situations such as emergencies, internal or external student grievances (if relevant to disability or accommodation process), court order, or subpoena. In any such cases, all University personnel involved will continue to maintain the student’s confidentiality.

The nature of the student’s disability is not contained within the faculty accommodation letters prepared for students, unless a student requests to disclose specific information, such as emergency medical information. Generally, faculty members only have access to information regarding the accommodation(s) that are appropriate and necessary to meet the student’s needs. Parents do not have access to any disability information, nor to information regarding grades, attendance, use of accommodations, etc., without specific written release from the student.

Faculty and non-SDRC staff should not accept or keep medical, psycho-educational or psychological documentation or records from students. This does not include routine medical excuses for absences due to illness or injury. Students who offer such records to faculty members should be referred to the SDRC.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

The University offers accommodation to any qualified student with a disability who requires such services in order to have equal access. It is the student’s responsibility to make accommodation requests. The student is also responsible for his/her own work and grade in each course. In order to obtain disability-related services and accommodations, the student must:

1. Disclose the disability to the SDRC
2. Provide a Request for Services and documentation of the disability
3. Make a request for specific accommodations in a timely manner

The student is responsible for meeting with faculty during the second week of classes to review the accommodation request, and not simply leave it for faculty to review alone. Students are responsible for contacting the SDRC if there is any difficulty with the accommodation process.

SDRC policies and procedures can be found on the University [website](#). Faculty should also have written procedures and expectations which will be outlined in their syllabi. Students are responsible for taking the initiative to become familiar with all regulations.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY/STAFF

Faculty and staff are responsible for establishing a cooperative atmosphere when working with students with disabilities. Faculty should meet with students during the second week of classes or upon issuance of an accommodation letter. The accommodation letter and any other required forms will be e-mailed to the faculty member each semester at the beginning of the second week of classes. The student and the faculty member should arrange a time to meet outside of class to discuss implementation methods of providing the requested accommodation.

Faculty are not obligated to provide accommodations until the accommodation letter is received. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively. If a student requests an accommodation and the faculty member has no official notification (Accommodation Letter), it is important that the faculty member refers the student to the SDRC.

University staff also have an obligation to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities. Any student request for significant modification to University policies or procedures would be an appropriate situation for consultation with the SDRC.

Faculty should not refuse an accommodation without first contacting the SDRC. A faculty member who questions the appropriateness of any requested accommodation should contact the SDRC. No accommodation should alter the fundamental nature of a course or program of study. The procedure for requesting classroom accommodations is included in the Appendix.

Faculty are responsible for including a [statement](#) in their course syllabi acknowledging consideration of and willingness to accommodate students with disabilities. The following statement should appear verbatim on all syllabi:

Assistance for Student Needs Related to Disability

If you have a disability as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, you may be eligible to receive accommodations to assist in programmatic and physical accessibility. The Student

Disability Resource Center, a unit of the Division of Student Affairs, can assist you in formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and in providing support in developing appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to all GCSU programs and facilities. Course requirements will not be waived, but accommodations may assist you in meeting the requirements. For documentation requirements and for additional information, we recommend that you contact the Office of Disability Services.

ACCOMMODATIONS & SERVICES

The following sections will cover some of the more commonly requested accommodations and services. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, nor is it designed to include every detail regarding a SDRC process or procedure. For more details on specific services or accommodations, students are encouraged to visit the office, review the website (www.gcsu.edu/disability), call the office at 478-445-5931, or e-mail disability@gcsu.edu.

Although it is the responsibility of the student to request specific accommodations, the SDRC can assist the student in this process. This may be done in part by reviewing previous school records and pertinent medical information, as appropriate. Requests for accommodations must be made in writing. Copies of requests are kept on file, as are the signed accommodation letters.

Student Accommodations may include:

Alternative Format Materials

Students who qualify for this service may request that print materials (books, etc.) be converted to a format such as e-text, Braille, or audio. The University may obtain texts from CIDI (Center for Inclusive Design & Innovation) or other publishers.

It is the responsibility of the student to provide the SDRC with the appropriate information about each requested text (title, author, publisher, copyright date, ISBN) as early as possible. All requests will be processed as quickly as possible regardless of when they are received. Proof of purchase (a receipt) is required to provide alternate formats.

Attendance - Reasonable Modification of Attendance or Tardy Policy

Attendance is important for long-term and consistent academic success. Requests for modification of attendance or tardy policies are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. This is most often approved in cases where a student has a disability condition which could flare up intermittently, but not require a visit to the doctor, thereby not providing the often-requested medical excuse. Examples could include seizures, diabetes, debilitating nausea from chemotherapy, gastrointestinal distress from Crohn's Disease, or a flare-up of panic disorder. Any of these situations would be familiar to the student and treatment could simply include their usual medications, additional sleep, etc. A medical visit might be unnecessary and perhaps even denied by insurance.

In the event that attendance modification is recommended, students have the obligation to meet with faculty to form a communication plan. The SDRC suggests contacting faculty regarding each absence – before the absence if possible, or as soon as possible afterward. The type of contact can be specified by the faculty (phone message, e-mail, etc.) The student is responsible for contacting faculty regarding any missed assignments, and must turn in such work within agreed-upon deadlines.

Tardiness, or the need to occasionally leave class unexpectedly, may also be addressed when dealing with a disability condition with unpredictable flare-ups such as Crohn's, migraines or diabetes. The student might be slightly late, or need to leave in the midst of class - without having to provide a medical explanation in front of other students.

Audio Record Classes

ADA Section 504 specifically states “a recipient . . . shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no handicapped student is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by the recipient because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.”

The Department of Education further states when discussing issues of instructor objections, “the instructor may not forbid a student's use of an aid if that prohibition limits the student's participation in the school program.”

Students with this accommodation may record class lectures and discussions. Recording class materials in audio format is allowed when students provide an Accommodation Letter with this accommodation.

Documentation for Third Party Agencies (Graduate Testing, Certifications, Licensure)

Some programs require or encourage students to take examinations for entry or completion of their degree, and other students will take exams for admission into graduate school, for licensure or certification after graduation from our programs.

External agencies have their own processes and documentation guidelines, sometimes having detailed requirements as to the nature and age of documentation, and may require letters from the student and/or the SDRC. Some agencies have deadlines for test accommodation requests that may be earlier than the typical deadline. Commonly requested accommodations could include extended time, distraction-reduced environment, sign language interpreter, paper vs. online format, large print, scribe to fill in scantron forms, etc.

In order to effectively meet such requests, students registered with the SDRC should make an appointment with the director well in advance of deadlines and research what documentation is needed. Efforts will be made to meet all requests, but late requests cannot be guaranteed.

Housing and Meal Plan Disability-Related Requests

All medical or disability-related accommodation requests regarding campus housing are coordinated through a joint process between Housing and the SDRC. The University's disability documentation guidelines apply to all requests, including those affecting housing and meal plans. The documentation must state the disability, describe current impact of functioning and support the specific request. All requests are considered on a case-by-case basis, and can include requests for (medically necessary) private room or bath, first floor location, flashing fire alarms, bathroom grab bars, etc.

Laptop Use

ADA Section 504 specifically states "a recipient . . . shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no handicapped student is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by the recipient because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills."

The Department of Education further states when discussing issues of instructor objections, "the instructor may not forbid a student's use of an aid if that prohibition limits the student's participation in the school program."

Students who have difficulty taking notes may use a laptop in class. Laptops allow for greater speed in taking notes and thus may allow a student to keep pace with others in the class. For students with disabilities, laptop use can improve engagement and decrease distraction in class. Use of a laptop is allowed when students provide an Accommodation Letter with this accommodation.

Notetaking Support

Notetaking support is provided for students whose documentation indicates an inability to effectively take their own notes in class. Notetaking support is considered a supplement to a student's own notes and is not considered a substitute for a student's full participation/attendance.

If a faculty member has received an accommodation letter that a student receives notetaking assistance, the student will bring the faculty member a separate statement for the faculty to read to the class notifying the class that the SDRC is looking for a notetaker. The SDRC requests assistance in the following ways:

- Feel free to approach a specific student if you feel s/he would be good (generally good grades, attendance, etc.).
- If you do not know the students in the class, please take a minute of class time to read the provided statement. (Please see below.)
- Do not identify the student needing the notetaker to the class when making the announcement.
- The notetaker will provide the SDRC with a copy of his/her notes for the remainder of the semester. The notetaker may scan the notes in the library, take a picture of their notes, or type their notes and e-mail them to the SDRC. All notes should be

emailed to disability@gcsu.edu .

- Notetakers providing notes for blind students (and occasionally other situations) may be asked to type their notes and send them as a Word document.

“The Student Disability Resource Center is looking for a volunteer note-taker for this class. Please consider helping your fellow students by volunteering for this program. Five minutes after each class can earn you 30-45 service hours per class in one semester. This is a great addition to your resume and makes you a good candidate when applying for scholarships or grants without spending any extra time away from your normal obligations. If you are interested in being a note-taker, please go to the Student Disability Resource Center, Russell Library 109, for more information.”

Priority Registration

Students with disabilities who qualify for this service can register on the first day of registration. Priority registration allows students with disabilities more flexibility in scheduling classes in a manner that meets the needs associated with their disability (e.g., timing of medication or treatments, mobility concerns, excessive fatigue or the need for extended time on tests). It also allows the SDRC to coordinate services more efficiently, such as when needing to relocate classrooms.

Service Animal Procedures

Under federal law, a Service Animal is defined as:

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 person’s disability. Examples of such 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. The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

- Only dogs will be recognized as service animals.
 - Miniature horses are also permitted, where reasonable, when the miniature horses have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for individuals with a disability. (Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds.) Entities covered by the ADA must

modify their policies to permit miniature horses where reasonable. The regulations set out four assessment factors to assist entities in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated in their facility. The assessment factors are (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control; (3) whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and (4) whether the miniature horse's presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility.

- If any animal other than a service dog is brought to class, and any reference to disability is made regarding the animal, please contact the SDRC.
- Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- Service animals are exempt from breed bans as well as size and weight limitations.
- Dogs whose sole function is "the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship" are not considered service dogs under the ADA.
- "The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence" do not qualify that animal as a service animal and "an animal individually trained to provide aggressive protection, such as an attack dog, is not appropriately considered a service animal."

Under the ADA, State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go. Service animals are not pets, and should not be fed or distracted. The animal should not be touched or petted without express permission from the handler, and then only when the animal is not actively involved in duties.

All service animals must comply with applicable laws regarding animals and their treatment and care. If living in the residence halls, the student is responsible for contacting the Executive Director of [University Housing](#) to inquire about Housing policies for service animals. The animal must be on a leash and under the handler's control at all times.

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Faculty/staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Staff/faculty cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to

ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal's presence.

In the event of an emergency, it should be noted that service animals and their handlers are considered a team and every effort should be made to keep the handler and their animal together. In such instances, the animal may bark, appear nervous or act in a protective manner regarding its handler. The animal should be viewed as acting in the appropriate manner given an emergency and should not be considered harmful.

Testing Accommodations

If a student qualifies for extended time, distraction-reduced testing environment, or adaptive technology, and faculty cannot provide the accommodation themselves, the [Center for Testing](#) is available to proctor tests, quizzes, in-class writing, exams, etc. The student is responsible for scheduling all testing appointments with the Center for Testing. A form for scheduling tests and midterms is available on the Center for Testing [website](#). The student should visit the Center for Testing or call their office to schedule final exam appointments. The Center for Testing requires notice from the student of at least seven business days during the semester and at least two weeks for final exams.

Students taking exams in the Center for Testing are expected to adhere to the University's academic honesty policy. Testing rooms have video recording/surveillance.

SERVICES FOR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING STUDENTS

Captioning (Speech-to-Text)

Speech-to-text service provides real-time captioning during classes or events for students who do not use sign language or when exact word-for-word English is deemed essential. The captioned material should be situated in the front of the classroom and near the instructor, with the captions being prominently displayed. The student should have both the captions and faculty member in their field of vision as visual cues are an important aspect of any communication. If a captionist is needed, he/she is there to facilitate what is spoken in the class, by both faculty and other students, into a form of visual communication, for real-time access and interaction.

Captionists will need an additional chair and may need to be seated near a power source for their equipment. It is requested that captionists be provided access to the course vocabulary, specifically names, or unusual or technical terms (copy of glossary or an extra desk copy of the text if available). These resources are requested in advance - as they can program their captioning equipment to assure more accurate transcripts. They also need a copy of the syllabus and calendar – such as cancelled class dates, tests dates, etc. Students may be provided a copy of the written transcript. The SDRC requests that the transcript not be shared with others in the course, as it is part of a disability accommodation for a specific student.

FM System

FM Systems are wireless assistive hearing devices that enhance the use of hearing aids, cochlear implants and also assist people who are hard of hearing but do not wear hearing aids, in particular over distance and in noisy environments. Typically the student will give the faculty a transmitter at the beginning of class and collect it at the end of class.

A traditional FM System comprises of two main parts – a radio transmitter and radio receiver. The transmitter captures sound via a microphone or direct connection to a sound source and transmits to the receiver.

Transmitters and receivers vary dependent on the manufacturer. Some have manual controls only while others have manual controls with a small screen for menu selection to set the transmission frequency between the transmitter and receiver and select the use of the audio input. The screen may also show the battery level, frequency channel and direction of the microphone.

Interpreting Services

- Interpreting is the process of transmitting spoken English into American Sign Language (ASL) and/or gestures for communication between Deaf and hearing individuals. ASL Interpreters do NOT sign each word that is heard – they translate between two DIFFERENT languages, much like interpreters who work between spoken French and spoken English or spoken English and spoken Spanish.
- Sign language is no more universal than spoken languages. American Sign Language (ASL) is the language used by a majority of people in the Deaf community in the United States, most of Canada (LSQ is used in Quebec), certain Caribbean countries and areas of Mexico. Other areas of the world use their own sign languages, such as England (British Sign Language) and Australia (Australian Sign Language, a.k.a. Auslan).
- There are two types of interpretation: simultaneous and consecutive
 - Simultaneous interpretation requires interpreters to listen and sign, or watch and speak, at the same time. The interpreter begins to convey a sentence in the target language while listening or watching the message being delivered in the source language. This type of interpreting happens most commonly in business meetings, college classes, or conferences.
 - In contrast, consecutive interpreting begins only after the speaker has spoken or signed a sentence or paragraph. Interpreters may need to take notes to assist in the process of creating a coherent accurate translation. This form of interpretation is used most often for witness testimony in legal settings or in a one-on-one meeting such as with a doctor, social worker, or counselor. It is the more accurate of the two types, as it allows more time for the interpreter to process the information and determine the most linguistically and culturally accurate manner to convey the concept in the target language.

- In both simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, the interpreter sits in proximity to the English speaker to allow the deaf person to see the interpreter as well as the facial and body expressions of the English speaker.
- Because of the need for a high degree of concentration in both types of interpretation and because of the physical demands of the work, interpreters often work in pairs if an assignment will last more than an hour, with each interpreting 20- to 30- minute segments.

The Role of Sign Language Interpreters

- It is the interpreter's **sole** responsibility to enable D/HOH individuals the opportunity to *communicate* freely with hearing individuals.
- Interpreters may request materials prior to certain assignments to assist in their preparation.
- Interpreters are unable to take on dual roles in a classroom (such as participating in activities, acting as an aid, answering discussion questions, running errands, etc.), as this would conflict with them performing their primary responsibility of facilitating communication for D/HOH students.
- Interpreters strive to remain unbiased toward the content of their work and not alter or modify the meaning or tone of what is conveyed.
- Interpreters abide by a Code of Professional Conduct, which includes the crucial tenant of confidentiality. An interpreter is expected to refrain from discussing or disclosing the content of a situation in which he or she interpreted (with the possible exception being court-mandated testimony).

Tips for Working Effectively with a Sign Language Interpreter

Interpreters are trained professionals who are bound by a code of professional conduct. They have no knowledge of the student's classroom performance or the etiology of their deafness. The following suggestions are helpful for working with an interpreter in your classroom.

- **Speak directly to the student** who is deaf or hard of hearing. Don't ask the interpreter to "Tell him/her..."
- **Look at the D/HOH student**, not the interpreter. The interpreter will sign whatever you say and voice whatever the student signs into English. The interpreters are not permitted to voice their own personal opinions or enter the conversation.
- **Speak at a normal rate**. The interpreter will ask you to slow down or repeat if the delivery is too fast.
- **Allow the interpreter to sit or stand near you**. The interpreter, the student, and the instructor should work out the best place for the interpreter to work. The closer the interpreter is to the speaker/instructor, the easier it is for the student to see the interpreter at the same time as the instructor and any visual aids.

- **Timing:** Remember that the interpreter will be a few words/concepts behind the speaker. Allow the interpreter time to finish their interpretation so the student may ask questions or join the class discussion. If other students call out answers or answer immediately after an instructor presents the question, you will find that the student will seem to not participate. This is not because this student does not wish to do so or that they do not understand or that they are simply a quiet person... it is because the question was answered while they were still getting the question presented through the interpreter. This can be managed by the instructor guiding turn taking and allowing the interpreter to finish signing before students can provide answers.
- **Materials:** Provide the interpreter with extra copies of materials being discussed in class. This allows the interpreter to study pertinent vocabulary, have a visual reference to draw upon in interpreting into a visual (signed) language, and be prepared for class. If an instructor frequently relies on PowerPoint presentations, or has detailed lecture notes, these can often be of assistance in preparing an interpreter for lectures.
- **Notetaking Support:** Students using interpreters will need notetaking support (copies of notes from other students in the class) as they cannot effectively watch the interpreter and take notes. To turn their attention to taking notes would require that they stop “listening” to the lecture.
- **Class Schedule:** Interpreters are paid professionals and skilled interpreters are in great demand. This makes it important to inform students of any class cancellations or changes as early as possible so they can make arrangements with their interpreters.
- **No Shows:** If the interpreter does not show up, the student (or a faculty member) should notify the SDRC. The student and the instructor will work with the SDRC to decide what to do (tape the lecture to be interpreted later, allow the student to leave, etc.)
- **Classroom Dynamics:** Initially, an interpreter’s presence may be distracting to the instructor or other students. However, the initial curiosity will subside and having an interpreter in your classroom will be a comfortable situation for all concerned.

TEMPORARY INJURY OR ILLNESS

Students who have a temporary injury or illness that may impact their academics are encouraged to talk to their instructors about any assistance they may need for the duration of their impairment. In most cases, students with a temporary injury or illness do not need to come to the SDRC and can work informally with instructors to get the support they need. Examples of support that could be provided by an instructor without needing an Accommodation Letter from the SDRC could include testing support (for students with hand/arm injuries) or leniency with arriving late (for students temporarily using crutches or a boot). If a student will be absent from classes for an extended period of time they should consult their academic advisor.

Accessible (“Handicapped”) Parking

Disability parking located on the Georgia College campus is only for drivers with state-issued disability license plates, permanent disability placards, or temporary disability parking permits. Temporary disability parking permits can be obtained and approved through the Georgia Department of Driver Services by completing a [Disabled Persons Parking Affidavit Form \(pdf\)](#). These permits are not approved through the Georgia College Student Disability Resource Center or the Office of Parking and Transportation.

The disability parking permit and the Georgia College parking permit with the assigned disability validation sticker must be displayed during enforcement hours. In addition, the state issued disability placard or license tag must be displayed. Placards should be placed behind the permit with the expiration facing the windshield.

If you have a temporary injury or illness you may apply for a Pass from Parking and Transportation. For more information regarding Georgia College’s parking map and policies, please visit [Parking and Transportation Services](#).

STUDENT ADVOCACY

The SDRC has created the current procedures with an emphasis on creating opportunities for students to learn the basics of self-advocacy. Often students have not had ample opportunity to learn how to advocate for what they need, or how to express those needs in an effective way. One of the roles of the SDRC staff involves teaching students how to begin to advocate. Ideally, as a role model, the student can learn from others how to self-advocate, and what to do in a given situation. Occasionally, students and faculty have issues that arise which necessitate intervention.

SDRC staff can and will intervene as needed to mediate when there is conflict or misunderstanding that cannot be resolved by the student and faculty. Students may know what they want or need, but cannot express it in a way that is understood. This is where professional intervention can remedy the situation, and in that process the student and faculty both learn how to work better with each other.

Cases where the usual communication process is not effective will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

<https://www.gcsu.edu/disability/information-faculty>

<https://www.gcsu.edu/disability/faculty-faq>

APPENDIX

Procedure for Academic Accommodation Requests

- I. Student completes a Request for Services and provides disability documentation to the SDRC by mailing it, e-mailing it to disability@gcsu.edu, faxing to 478-445-1959, or delivering it to us in person.
 - A. The SDRC sends all documentation to the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders to be evaluated. Once the evaluation is received, the SDRC contacts the student on their status. If the evaluation determines the student is eligible for services, the SDRC director meets with the student and discusses accommodations. The SDRC then e-mails the student and the Center for Testing, listing accommodations discussed at the meeting and notification to make an appointment to sign applicable forms.
- II. Accommodation letters and any required forms are e-mailed directly to faculty at the beginning of the second week of classes. The student and faculty meet during office hours to discuss accommodations.
- III. If faculty and student cannot agree upon accommodation, student notifies the SDRC. (Faculty may also contact the SDRC.) SDRC staff and faculty review accommodation recommendations, impact on essential functions of the course, and seek an acceptable agreement with student.
- IV. If SDRC staff, faculty and student cannot reach agreement, then the request is forwarded to faculty member's Chair and/or Dean, Legal Affairs and the Office of Inclusive Excellence for review. Chair/Dean, Legal Affairs and the Office of Inclusive Excellence will review request and talk with involved parties as necessary.
- V. Chair/Dean, Legal Affairs and the Office of Inclusive Excellence makes decision, and notifies all parties in writing.

Procedure for a Request for Disability-Related Modification or Substitution of Academic Requirements

I. Student contacts the Student Disability Resource Center, and provides a Request for Services and documentation of disability that includes a request for modification/substitution for [foreign language](#) and/or [math](#).

II. The SDRC staff will send the documentation and request to the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders to be evaluated.

- A. If documentation supports the request, SDRC staff will forward the report to the student, the student's advisor, and the Registrar's Office.
- B. If documentation does not support the request, the request will be denied. The SDRC will forward the report to the student.

COMPLAINT AND INVESTIGATION POLICY

All members of the Georgia College community shall adhere to all applicable laws, policies, and procedures, including those enacted to ensure proper action against all forms of misconduct. This Policy addresses the process for reporting and investigating alleged misconduct and/or inappropriate behavior of members of the Georgia College community, which include but are not limited to faculty, staff, students, volunteers, visitors, and vendors.

Procedures

I. Complaint Process

A. Generally speaking, all complaints involving the misconduct of a Georgia College employee, volunteers, visitors, and contract workers, shall be filed with the Office of Human Resources. Generally speaking, all complaints involving the misconduct of a Georgia College student shall be filed with the Office of Student Affairs. Alternatively, all complaints may also be filed via the Georgia College General Online Complaint Form or the Ethics and Compliance Reporting Hotline.

1. More specifically, certain complaints should be filed as follows:
 - a. All complaints of sexual misconduct shall be filed with the Title IX Coordinator.
 - b. All employee complaints not related to sexual misconduct shall be filed with the Office of Human Resources.
 - c. All complaints of fraud, waste, and abuse shall be filed with the Office of Internal Audit & Advisory Services.
 - d. Any complaint involving a possible crime, other than those complaints exempted from disclosure under federal or state laws or regulations, shall

be referred to the Department of Public Safety as soon as practicable, but no later than two (2) business days.

B. In addition to the complaint procedures listed here, certain student-initiated complaints must also be maintained on a current log for SACS compliance.

1. Only for the purposes of SACS compliance, a complaint is:
 - a. A statement detailing unfair treatment, dissatisfaction with services, or similar concerns made by a prospective, current, or former student about his or her own experience, in written form including email, letter, submitted form, or a handwritten note.
2. Only for the purposes of SACS compliance, a complaint is not:
 - a. A petition for exception to an established policy or procedure;
 - b. A question about a policy or procedure;
 - c. A request for service;
 - d. An appeal made through an established process;
 - e. An allegation of harassment or discrimination for which other reporting processes exist;
 - f. Complaining, as one might see on a social media site;
 - g. Made by someone who is not a student, or who is speaking on behalf of the student; or
 - h. Spoken.
3. The complaint log shall contain:
 - a. Date of complaint;
 - b. Student name;
 - c. Summary of complaint;
 - d. Measures taken to resolve complaint;
 - e. Resolution; and
 - f. Date of resolution.
4. A log shall be maintained by each office or department where students may make complaints, including the Office of the President and all colleges.
 - a. A copy of each log should be provided to the Office of Legal Affairs quarterly.

C. A complaint should be filed within 120 calendar days following the alleged misconduct or the date on which the complainant knew or should have known of the alleged misconduct, except:

1. For allegations involving sexual misconduct
2. For an employee who leaves the University, the employee must file a complaint relating to alleged discrimination and/or harassment occurring during that individual's employment with the University within ten (10) calendar days following the employee's termination of employment from the University.
3. For a student bringing a complaint against faculty in the context of a subordinate - supervisory relationship between the faculty member and the student (such as in relation to teaching, advising, research, and thesis or dissertation supervision), a student may file a complaint one (1) year after no longer under the faculty's supervision or three (3) years from the date of the alleged behavior, even if the student is no longer affiliated with the University, whichever is earlier.

D. A complaint may not be reopened after final resolution, despite whether the investigation was formal or informal.

1. When a complaint has been resolved, all allegations that are the subject of the complaint are considered resolved.
2. A resolution is considered final once the time for an appeal, if applicable, has expired or the appeals process is otherwise complete.
3. If misconduct continues after final resolution, a new complaint may be filed.

II. Interim Measures

A. Pending resolution of the matter, a representative from one of the following offices: Office of Human Resources, Office of Internal Audit & Advisory Services, Office of Legal Affairs, and Office of Student Affairs, may recommend to the appropriate University or University System of Georgia official, under applicable faculty/staff or student policy, interim measures to protect all members of the University community and/or to maintain the integrity of the investigation process.

1. These measures may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. No-contact orders;
 - b. Change of housing assignment;
 - c. Change in class schedule or location;
 - d. Change in job area/location or schedule;
 - e. Change in supervision, administrative leave; or
 - f. Any other suitable measure.

III. Investigation Process

A. The investigation process consists of five (5) phases:

1. Assessment phase;
2. Fact-finding/informal investigation phase;

3. Formal investigation phase;
4. Report writing phase; and
5. Implementation phase.

B. Assessment Phase

1. The assessment phase consists of a complaint being received by the appropriate office whereby the Office of Legal Affairs reviews the complaint, determines if an investigation is necessary, and assigns an investigator to proceed according to the process outlined in this Policy.
 - a. In some cases, the complainant's concerns may be addressed by referring him or her to applicable laws, regulations, grant requirements, or University policies and, as such, will not warrant further investigation.
2. If there is any question as to what office should house the complaint and/or investigation, or the complaint is complex in nature, the complaint shall be referred to the Triage Committee to review the facts of the complaint, determine whether an investigation is necessary, and determine which office shall investigate the complaint.
 - a. The area to which the matter is assigned shall be based on the type of incident reported. Possible investigation offices include: Office of Human Resources, Office of Internal Audit & Advisory Services, and Office of Legal Affairs.
3. A case manager from the investigative office will be assigned to the complaint.
4. The case manager shall investigate or select an investigator and oversee the investigation within the office to ensure investigation is completed within the confines of this policy.

C. Fact-finding/Informal Investigation Phase

1. The fact-finding phase consists of gathering documents and other pertinent information related to the investigation and interviewing the complainant and/or other key parties to the complaint to determine whether such information warrants a formal investigation.
 - a. If the fact-finding process reveals there is sufficient information to proceed with a formal investigation, the investigator shall proceed according to the formal investigation phase process outlined in this Policy.
 - b. If the fact-finding process reveals there is insufficient information to proceed with a formal investigation, the case manager or investigator shall prepare an informal investigation report based on the results of the fact-

finding/informal investigation and proceed according to the reporting phase process outlined in this Policy.

D. Formal Investigation Phase

The formal investigation phase consists of several steps, which include:

- a. Sending out Acknowledgement of Complaint within two (2) business days.
- b. Sending a Confirmation of Complaint to the complainant summarizing his/her allegations and the investigation process.
- c. Complainant confirming content of Confirmation of Complaint.
- d. Sending a Notice of Complaint to the respondent informing him/her of the allegations, with copy sent to chain of command.
- e. Respondent is entitled to, but not required to, submit a Response to Allegations within five (5) business days of receipt of the Notice of Complaint.
- f. The investigator meets with the parties, relevant witnesses, and collects all supporting evidence.

E. Report Writing Phase

1. When an investigation is concluded, the reporting phase begins which consists of the investigator preparing a written report and providing the report to appropriate University officials.
 - a. The written report may contain: findings of fact, conclusions, concerns, recommendations, or any other information the investigator believes bears significance on the outcome of the investigation.
 - b. At minimum, the investigation report should contain:
 - a. A summary of the complainant's relevant allegations;
 - b. A summary of the respondent's relevant statements in response to the allegations;
 - c. A description of the relevant information provided by witnesses or obtained from documents, including comments submitted in response to the investigation;
 - d. Investigator's statement of credibility; and
 - e. The investigator's analysis and findings.
 - c. The written report will be provided to appropriate University officials as is necessary to ensure proper resolution and follow-up regarding the matter.
 - a. Appropriate University officials are, but are not limited to, the director and/or vice president of the appropriate division, or the University president.

b. A copy of all completed reports shall be submitted to the Office of Legal Affairs for centralized retention.

- d. The investigator will provide a Notice of Findings to all parties involved within established guidelines.

F. Implementation Phase Process

1. Corrective action includes, but is not limited to, recommended training, retraining, counseling, reprimand, administrative leave, and/or termination of employment.
 - a. All corrective actions should be consistent with the Progressive Discipline Process and Student Disciplinary Process.
 - b. If corrective action is recommended, the director or vice president of the appropriate department or division shall be notified, in writing, of such recommended corrective action.
 - c. Investigator shall provide a request for services form to any office responsible for implementing any recommended services as an outcome of the investigation.
 - d. Any recommended corrective action pertaining to employees will be taken by or coordinated with the Office of Human Resources.
 - e. Investigator shall follow up with director/vice president and Office of Human Resources within thirty days to ensure implementation of appropriate recommendations.

IV. Ethics and Compliance Reporting Hotline

A. The same procedure/process for receiving and resolving complaints via other avenues applies to complaints received via the Hotline, except:

1. A response to complaints received via the Hotline shall be made to the reporter/complainant within two (2) business days of receipt of the Hotline report that, at minimum, acknowledges receipt of the report.
2. While an investigation report may be necessary, the investigator or case manager shall also promptly document and close the case in the Hotline software.
 - a. Closing the Hotline investigation shall include, at minimum, notifying the reporter/complainant, documenting the resolution and action taken, and making the required entries in the Hotline software in a manner that the date on which the case is closed is properly documented.

B. Complaints involving members of the Triage Committee or University administration related to fraud, waste, or abuse shall be referred to the University System of Georgia's Office of Internal Audit and Compliance for remediation and/or investigation.

V. Miscellaneous

A. Investigation Timeframe

1. An investigation is considered complete once a final investigation report has been issued and the time for an appeal has expired, if applicable.
2. Barring extenuating circumstances, all investigations should be completed within sixty (60) days of receipt of a complaint – unless a separate policy governing a particular investigation states otherwise.
 - a. If an investigation proceeds beyond sixty (60) days, such extenuating circumstances shall be noted to investigation file or report.

B. Conflict of Interest

1. In the event a conflict of interest arises surrounding an investigation, the parties may request an alternate investigator or the case manager may assign an alternate investigator.
 - a. The alternate investigator may be from another office, so long as the alternate investigating office's director or supervisor has approved and the investigator is qualified to conduct the investigation.
 - b. If a party requests an alternate investigator, one will only be appointed for good cause upon completing an Alternate Investigator Request.

C. Reporting Protection

1. Retaliation is strictly prohibited by federal and state law, as well as University System of Georgia and University policies, and is defined as “the discharge, suspension, or demotion by a public employer of a public employee or any other adverse employment action taken by a public employer against a public employee in the terms or conditions of employment for disclosing a violation of or noncompliance with a law, rule, or regulation to either a supervisor or government agency.”
2. Georgia Whistleblower Act protects public employees who disclose an alleged violation of or noncompliance with any federal, state, or local law, rule or regulation pertaining to the possible existence of any activity constituting fraud, waste, and abuse in or relating to any state programs or operations.
 - a. “Any public employee who reports a potential violation shall be free from discipline or reprisal from his employer, unless such disclosure was made with false and reckless disregard.”

VI. Guidelines

A. Generally, investigations are subject to the Georgia Open Records Act; however, some investigations are exempted from disclosure under the Act per federal and/or state law. Requests for investigation materials are open records requests and shall be processed by the Office of Legal Affairs.

VII. Non-Compliance

A. Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion in accordance with relevant University policies and may result in prosecution in accordance with state and federal law.