

NUMBER: STAF 6.02

SECTION: Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

SUBJECT: Support Services and Accommodations for Students with Diagnosed Disabilities

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Policy for: Columbia Campus  
Procedure for: Columbia Campus  
Authorized by: Vice President for Student Affairs  
Issued by: Office of Student Disability Services

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## I. Policy

An increasing number of individuals with disabilities are seeking admission to colleges and universities. Their quest for postsecondary education has been assured through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, which state that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from 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.

College students with disabilities are among those who are entitled to the same rights and protections as other students. The University of South Carolina is committed to serving students with disabilities who have the potential for success in a competitive university setting.

Since the nature and severity of disabilities may vary considerably, the recommended support services and accommodations may be applicable only when they are appropriate to the needs of the individual student with a disability. All requests for accommodations must be consistent with an academic advisory plan on file with the Office of Student Disability Services and provided for collaboratively with the deans of the student's respective college.

### A. Definition of a Disability

1. The University of South Carolina has adopted the federal definition of a disability (as stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990), 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.
2. Upon acceptance, students with disabilities may register with the Office of Student Disability Services by submitting an application and documentation of their disability. Documentation will be reviewed based on guidelines provided for by that office.
3. Students already enrolled at the University of South Carolina who suspect that they have a disability or have not yet registered with the Office Student Disability Services, should seek assistance from that office where they can be referred to the appropriate clinician to assess them. All resultant supporting documentation must be submitted to the Office of Student Disability Services for verification of disability status.

II. Procedures

A. Recommended Support Services for Students with Disabilities

The University provides various accommodations for students with disabilities. These accommodations are recommended on a case-by-case basis and are contingent upon the severity of the disability and its impact on the students' education. The primary intent of accommodations is to ensure the successful matriculation of students to degree completion.

B. Recommended Program Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

1. Under University of South Carolina policy, the Office of Student 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. The following program accommodations are suggested for implementation by the university if consistent with an academic advisory plan on file with the Office of Student Disability Services and the dean of the student's college:
  - a. Allow students with disabilities to take a reduced course load of nine semester hours or less for the fall or spring semester and three hours in any summer session to be considered a full-time student with regard to access

to University residence halls and eligibility for financial aid provided this is consistent with their academic advisory plans.

- b. Allow students with disabilities to audit a course before taking it for credit.
- c. Allow students with disabilities to take an incomplete in a course due to their need for additional time.
- d. Allow students with disabilities to withdraw from a course at any time during the term without grade penalty, upon approval of the Office of Student Disability Services, the instructor, and the dean of the student's college.
- e. Expand Pass/Fail option to cover courses that are particularly problematic for students with disabilities.

This preceding list is not meant to be exhaustive and serves as an example of the options available. Not all students will qualify for these accommodations nor should they be used in making decisions about the student's progress until each case is considered by the Office of Student Disability Services and in some cases the dean of the student's respective college.

#### C. Recommended Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

- 1. Instructors are encouraged to consult with the Office of Student Disability Services staff concerning the specific needs of individual students with disabilities. The following classroom accommodations may be allowed for students with disabilities, if consistent with an academic advisory plan on file with the Office of Student Disability Services and the dean of the student's college:
  - a. Use a digital voice recorder, with the understanding that any sharing or distribution of recordings will result in a referral to Student Conduct
  - b. Alternative test procedures such as extended time to complete tests, oral administration of tests and exams, or testing in a quiet environment to include the test proctoring lab available through the Office of Student Disability Services
  - c. Alternative assignments (differing in form, not in substance)
  - d. Oral presentation of written assignments, when appropriate
  - e. Access to calculators and dictionaries in the classroom and in test situations when appropriate

- f. Ongoing and more active monitoring of progress and student feedback since many students with specific learning disabilities are reluctant to initiate assistance
  - g. Use of textbooks in alternative formatting.
2. Students with disabilities should also be encouraged to participate in Student Success Center, ACE coaching and other supportive opportunities offered through the University. These strategies involve sound teaching practices for all students, but are especially important for students with disabilities.

### III. Reason for Revision

This policy was revised to update current practices as of 2016 and assure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA) of 2008.