



FLORIDA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# Supporting Students with Disabilities at FSU

## Student Disability Resource Center

Jennifer Mitchell  
Assistant Dean/Director  
Student Disability Resource Center



# Student Disability Resource Center

- As a department in the office of the Dean of Students our mission is to support an inclusive academic environment through education, empowerment, crisis management, and advocacy of students in collaboration with campus and community partners.



- The SDRC serves as a resource for students, faculty and staff of the university in relation to the provision of accommodations for the unique needs of students both in and out of the classroom.
- Through the provision of services the SDRC offers an opportunity for all students to achieve their academic and personal goals.



- Students with disabilities at Florida State University can find a variety of services within Student Disability Resource Center designed to coordinate academic accommodations, enhance academic success, and ensure access to all phases of university life.
- In addition to academic accommodations the SDRC is the support system for students in need of housing accommodations and dietary accommodations.



- Personnel in the SDRC oversee and coordinate services to ensure full accessibility to all students with documented disabilities on an individual basis. This access relates to academic and non-academic environments.
- Academic accommodations are determined based on documentation submitted by the student; these are monitored by disability specialists in the program.
- The office also provides some assistive technology equipment and services.
- All services through the main office are free of charge.



# What is the Legislation?

## Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act

**Rehab Act** - prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. **Section 504** generally prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in federally funded programs and activities

**ADA Title II** prohibits discrimination in access to services or programs of a public entity (this would be a public college or university) and **Title III** prohibits discrimination in access to places of public accommodation (such as private and public colleges and universities)



# What Do These Laws Mean?

In the application of both laws, students with disabilities must be qualified to participate in University activities.

- Specifically, a **qualified student** with a disability is one who meets the admission and essential eligibility requirements of a program or service, with or without:
  - modifications of rules, policies, or procedures,
  - removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers,
  - provision of auxiliary aids and services.



# What is a Disability?

- An **impairment** (e.g. AIDS, cancer, bipolar, depression, ADHD, dyslexia, etc.)
- This impairment manifests itself so as to **substantially** (quite significantly but not utterly) limit
- A **major life activity** (something central to daily living – e.g. walking, talking, reading, seeing, hearing, sleeping, procreation, eating, caring for self)
- Or, **record** of or is **perceived** having the above (three elements)
  - Impairment
  - That limits substantially
  - A major life activity





# So What's the Bottom Line?

“The ADA is an ‘equal opportunity’ law for people with disabilities.”

([http://www.ada.gov/ada\\_intro.htm](http://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm), Nov. 4, 2013)

The law does NOT require special treatment of students with disabilities, but does require that students be given the opportunity for equal participation in the University's programs. This is done by providing to eligible and qualified students appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids necessary to facilitate the students' fullest possible participation in the University's academic programs.



# Responsibility of the Faculty

- Inform students of service/programs: mandatory syllabus statement and verbal reinforcement in class
- Collaborate for consideration of course components (essential elements) and student's functional limitations
- Make textbook/syllabus available early
- Provide appropriate accommodations as stated in each student's accommodation letter
- Ensure accessibility in the classroom and all offices
- Make appropriate referrals
- Respect the confidentiality of students
- Hold students accountable to established academic standards



# Responsibility of the Student

- Self identify and disclose to the SDRC
- Provide complete and up-to-date documentation to the SDRC
- Request services as needed for both in class and out of class activities and events
- Participate in the process of determining, implementing, and facilitating reasonable accommodations
- Abide by student conduct code set by the university and course requirements
- Maintain academic standards set by college





# Responsibility of the Institution

- Ensure access to programs, services, and physical spaces (University wide)
- Provide reasonable, adequate and required services (University wide)
- Establish documentation guidelines (SDRC)
- Coordinate services (Collaboration across the University)
- Maintain confidentiality (University wide)
- Establish and communicate procedures to request services (Collaboration between SDRC, faculty and all academic departments and resource offices)
- Educate students, faculty and staff (Collaboration between SDRC and HR)



# Florida State University Data

\*as of April 2018

- Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) 37%
- Learning Disabilities 19%
- Psychological Disabilities 18%
- Chronic Health/Medical Impairments 11%
- Mobility Impairments 8%
- Visual Disabilities 2%
- Autism Spectrum Disorders 2%
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) 2%
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing 1%



# What Are Accommodations?

- Accommodations provide students with disabilities equal access to the same information as non-disabled students
- Accommodations provide students with disabilities the time and opportunity to demonstrate equal mastery of material as non-disabled students



# What is an Accommodation Letter?

- An accommodation letter is a legally binding document between the Instructor and the student.
- The accommodation letter will contain the list of accommodations that may be provided for the student in the classroom. The student has the right to use all OR some of the student's approved accommodations in each academic course.
- Always contact the Student Disability Resource Center should you have ANY question about how an accommodation should be provided.



# Sample Accommodation Letter



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEAN OF STUDENTS DEPARTMENT

**CONFIDENTIAL**

374 Traditions Way/108 Student Services Building  
P.O. Box 3064167  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-4167  
850/644-9566 · Fax 850/644-7164 · TDD 850/644-8504 · <https://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc/>

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty and Instructional Personnel

FROM: Kim Boo York, AT Coordinator, Student Disability Resource Center

DATE: January 12, 2018

RE: Steve Rogers **FSU EMPLID: 21T**

**LETTER EXPIRE DATE:** May 7, 2020

The purpose of this memorandum is to assist you, the faculty acting on behalf of the University, to provide reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations to students with documented disabilities registered in your class as mandated by law. Florida State University seeks to assure that qualified students with disabilities will not be disadvantaged because of the limitations created by their disability. FSU is committed to providing students with disabilities an educational opportunity equal to that of their peers without creating an unfair advantage.

It is the University's policy that students requiring accommodations **MUST** identify themselves and register with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC), the University's designated office responsible for determining eligibility, level of service, and reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

Steve is a student in your course this semester and is registered with SDRC. We have documentation on file and have met with this student verifying a need for the following classroom and exam accommodations:

- ◆ **Classroom/Instructional Accommodations**
  - FM hearing system in class
  - Supplemental notetaking assistance
  - Preferential seating (close to source of information)
  - Breaks during class sessions
  - Other: Student will need access to food and drink in class
- ◆ **Test/ Exam Accommodations**
  - Extended Time on Tests, Exams, and quizzes (50 % additional time)
  - Reduced distraction testing environment
  - Breaks during testing sessions
  - Exam may be administered in the SDRC testing facility
  - Alternate test format - specify: Student will need test provided as a Word document

Please note that this letter is limited to the expire date shown above and that it is the student's responsibility to arrange a meeting within one week after printing/receiving this form to discuss the above accommodations with the instructor.





# ALL SYLLABI ARE REQUIRED TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

## **Americans With Disabilities Act:**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
- (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
sdrc@fsu.edu  
www.dos.fsu.edu/sdrc

<http://facsenate.fsu.edu/Curriculum-Resources/syllabus-language>



# Instructional Tips:

- Never ask a student what their disability is. Only ask what assistance they need from the list of accommodations on the accommodation letter.
- As the faculty member you are responsible for maintaining complete confidentiality in relation to the student's accommodations and their status as a student with a disability.
- Do not provide a requested accommodation NOT on the accommodation letter unless you would be willing to provide that same assistance for any student in your classroom.



## Accessible Van Services

All students who have mobility or chronic health issues are eligible to use the FSU Accessible Van and Accessible Golf Cart





# Defining Service Animals

- New federal guidelines allow for service animals in the academic classrooms.
  - A service animal is defined as a dog (or miniature horse) that is trained to perform a task for a student with a disability that they cannot otherwise perform themselves.
- Service animals may be used for disabilities other than visual impairments.



# What Can I Ask About a Student's Service Animal?

Only two questions can be asked of a student in relation to a Service Animal on campus:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
2. What service or task does the animal provide for you?



# Accommodations Regarding Food Allergies

- Food allergies are now a protected class under ADA.
- Faculty may be asked to make an announcement that food cannot be brought into the classroom due to this.
  - In this situation, the faculty member will be provided with a script to read to the class if this is necessary.



# Important Things to Know About Service Animals

- Students with service animals do NOT have to register with the Student Disability Resource Center in order to bring the animal into an academic building.
- Students are NOT required to submit documentation of a disability or to provide documentation of the service animals training.
- Service animals are considered an extension of the student themselves and thus must follow the same conduct code.
- The service animal may not be disruptive in the classroom, such as barking or walking around and must be under control at all times. Faculty may ask the student to remove the disruptive animal from the classroom.



# Emotional Support Animals

- Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) are *not considered service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act.*
- These support animals provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with psychiatric disabilities and mental impairments, such as depression, anxiety, and certain phobias; however, unlike service animals, ESAs **do not** have special training to perform specific tasks to assist people with disabilities.
- ESAs only pertain to a student's dwelling and may not be taken to class.
- If a student needs to request an ESA accommodation, they must register with the SDRC





# Accommodations Regarding Food Allergies

- Food allergies are a protected class under ADA.
- Faculty may be asked to make an announcement that food cannot be brought into the classroom due to this.
- Students are connected through the SDRC with Seminole Dining connection to ensure all dietary needs are met.



# Housing Accommodations

- Florida State University (FSU) provides housing accommodations for students with a documented qualifying medical, physical or psychological disability on a case-by-case basis.
- To be considered for a housing accommodation, the student must register with the Student Disability Resource Center.
- Focus is on how the condition relates to the student's request for a Housing accommodation. There must be a direct link established between the condition and the requested housing accommodation.



# Broader Issues Related to Disability

- Language is very powerful. Please think about the words you use and ensure that inclusive language is modeled within your course.
- Confidentiality is required under ADA and must be maintained at all times.
- Enrollment with the SDRC is ongoing. Students can register at any time during the semester. The faculty member has one week from when the student presents to letter of accommodation and meets to discuss his/her accommodations to have the accommodations implemented.
- Individuals have both visible and invisible disabilities, never assume.



# Campus Referral Resources

## **Adult Learning Evaluation Center (ALEC)**

Provides diagnostic testing

2207 Stone Building

Florida State University

(850) 644-3611

[Coe-alec@fsu.edu](mailto:Coe-alec@fsu.edu)

## **Psychology Clinic**

Provides diagnostic testing

FSU Psychology Department

1107 W. Call St.

(850) 644-3006

<http://www.psy.fsu.edu/community/clinic>



# Campus Referral Resources

## **University Counseling Center**

201 Askew Student Life Building

(850) 644-2003

<http://counseling.fsu.edu/>

## **Health and Wellness Center**

960 Learning Way

(850) 644-6230

<http://healthcenter.fsu.edu/>

## **Academic Center for Excellence (Free Tutoring)**

ACE Learning Center at Johnston Ground (WJB)

(850) 645-9151

<http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring>



# Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)

874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
(850) 644-9566 (V)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
(850) 644-7164 (TTY)  
(850) 645-1852 (Fax)  
[sdrc@fsu.edu](mailto:sdrc@fsu.edu)  
[dos.fsu.edu/sdrc](http://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc)

