



**Services Handbook  
for Students with Disabilities**



**GUSTAVUS**   

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GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

# Services Handbook for Students with Disabilities

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# **Introduction . . . . .**

Gustavus Adolphus College is dedicated to providing for the needs of enrolled students with disabilities. Assistant Dean of Students, Stephen Bennett, and Disability Services Coordinator, Laurie Bickett, provide consultations, referral, and direct assistance to students with disabilities. The Disability Services Coordinator is located in the Advising Center, 204 Johnson Student Union. This guide will help you use the services for students with disabilities at Gustavus.

# Eligibility . . . . .

Services are available at no cost to all students who

1. have an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,
2. have documentation of such an impairment,  
and
3. can demonstrate that the requested accommodations are necessary for participation in college programs.

**Students who have a documented language disability may work with the Disability Services Coordinator to petition for course substitutions in place of the foreign language requirement (see page 8).**

# Responsibilities . . . . .

## Student Responsibilities

- Identify yourself and your needs to Laurie Bickett, Disability Services Coordinator, in the Advising Center (933-7027) or (933-6286).
- Provide current and complete documentation (see page 6).
- Keep the Disability Services Coordinator informed of changes in your needs or status.
- Request services and accommodations in a timely manner and in the appropriate way.
- Attend class and abide by all policies of the institution.
- Follow Disability Services' procedures for accommodations.
- Make an appointment with your professors during the first week of class so that you can communicate your needs.
- Realize that the instructor will not lower his or her expectations in terms of academic standards. Instead, the instructor and student are encouraged to work together to find alternate methods of accomplishing required tasks.
- Act as an adult by taking responsibility for your actions.

## Disability Services

- Facilitate reasonable accommodations.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** Although the Disability Services Coordinator reserves the right to disclose a disability to Gustavus administrative offices on a need-to-know basis, we will not disclose information regarding disabilities to faculty, coaches, or other college personnel without permission.
- Treat students as adults.

## Faculty and Staff Responsibilities

- Treat students with respect and dignity.
- Implement reasonable accommodations.
- Communicate directly with students.
- **Maintain confidentiality.**
- Inform students of their status in classes and/or programs.
- Show confidence in students' abilities to achieve their potential.

## Self-Identification Policy . . . . .

The Disability Services Coordinator will not disclose a disability directly to a professor. If students want faculty to know about a disability, they may sign a **Consent to Release information** form and request a letters of introduction from the Disability Services Coordinator, Laurie Bickett. These letters will be given directly to students to be hand delivered to faculty members.

Students frequently ask when is the appropriate time to disclose a disability to a professor. Many students do so the first week of classes; others wait until they have failed a test or missed a large number of classes, due to disability-related conditions.

Gustavus' policy is to encourage students to disclose their disability to their professors early in the semester. Initiating the self-disclosure process during the first weeks of the semester can serve as a type of insurance policy for students. If accommodations are utilized, prior planning and discussion have already taken place; if students decide not to use accommodations, the instructor is aware that accommodations may be requested at some later point.

# Accommodations . . . . .

## **What is an Accommodation?**

The term accommodation refers to any technique that alters the academic setting or environment, without changing the amount of work in the classroom or the content of that work. (Jacob, Wadlington & Bailey, 1998).

Accommodations to the regular course methods or program components allow full participation by students with disabilities. Accommodations do not modify content or rigor of courses or essential elements of programs.

## **How are Letters of Introduction Used?**

Letters of introduction can be written by the Disability Services Coordinator each semester. Students should deliver these letters personally to faculty members during the first two weeks of class. The letters include substantiation of the disability and requests for accommodations. Use these letters as a springboard for discussion between faculty and students.

## **What About Testing Accommodations?**

One of the most common disability-related accommodations has to do with the testing environment. On occasion faculty members and students are not able to find a mutually agreeable time and location for testing. In these instances, the Disability Services Coordinator will facilitate an appropriate testing environment. Students are responsible for informing the Disability Services Coordinator of the time and date of their tests, as well as any needs for special equipment, a minimum of **three (3) school days prior to the test**.

## **What Constitutes a Reasonable Accommodation?**

An accommodation or auxiliary aid makes full participation in educational programs possible for students with disabilities and makes evaluation of students' understanding of course content possible for instructors without interference from the disability.

# Checklist for Requesting Accommodations for a Disability. . . . .

- Send documentation of the disability to the Disability Services Coordinator in the Advising Center. See “Guidelines for Documentation of a Disability” to understand what constitutes appropriate documentation.
- Complete and return a **Registration for Disability Services** form, available from the Advising Center and in the center pages of this handbook, and then meet with the Disability Services Coordinator to discuss accommodations.
- Make requests for accommodations known to the Disability Services Coordinator in a timely manner, preferably within the first two weeks of a semester, or first three days of a January Term. If requesting accommodations that require time to prepare, such as hiring sign language interpreters, or arranging audio-books, request the accommodation with appropriate advanced notice.
- Sign a **Consent to Release Information** form, available in the Advising Center and in the center pages of this handbook, for accommodations that require disclosing a disability to a faculty member, college administrator, coach, another student, or outside contractor.
- Schedule and confirm the test that is to be taken with the Disability Services Coordinator **at least three (3) days prior to taking the test**. Also arrange for any special equipment needed for the test such as computers, slide projectors, graphing calculators, etc.

Gustavus requests that documentation of a disability be submitted in a timely manner. Two weeks prior to registering for the first semester of classes is the ideal time to submit such information to the Disability Services Coordinator. The Disability Services Coordinator understands that some individuals may be first identified as having a disability during their college career. Gustavus will do its best to accommodate needs mid-semester.

# Guidelines for Documentation of a Disability . . . . .

## **Role of the Disability Services Coordinator**

The Disability Services Coordinator is responsible for encouraging success in and out of the classroom for all students at Gustavus. Support services for students with disabilities fall under that responsibility. The Disability Services Coordinator will provide consultations, referrals, and direct assistance to students with disabilities in conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Students.

## **General Guidelines for Documentation**

Gustavus Adolphus College is dedicated to providing for the needs of enrolled students who have disabilities. Reasonable classroom and program accommodations and auxiliary aids will be provided for students with appropriately documented disabilities. Guidelines for documentation follow. Please forward appropriate documentation to

Laurie Bickett  
Disability Services Coordinator  
Gustavus Adolphus College  
St. Peter, MN 56082  
Voice and Relay (507) 933-7027  
FAX (507) 933-6207

Documentation must have been prepared by persons who are not family members of students and who are qualified by professional training and practice to diagnose and treat the impairment leading to the disability. The documentation must also be typed or word processed and printed on the letterhead of either the practitioner or the agency hosting the practice.

The provision of all modifications and auxiliary aids is based upon the indication that the modification or aid is appropriate to the needs and capabilities of students. Therefore, recent and appropriate documentation relevant to students' learning environments is in their best interest. To be recent, the reports should be no more than three (3) years old for students who graduated from high school just prior to applying for services and accommodations or no more than five (5) years old for students who graduated two (2) years or longer, prior to applying for services. Exceptions can be made in the case of disabilities that are known to be stable throughout a life span.

Gustavus reserves the right to request further assessment of students who provide out-of-date or incomplete documentation. All assessment is done at the expense of the students.

The Disability Services Coordinator retains student records for seven (7) years after students graduate from the College. At that time the records are destroyed. Records of students who leave the College without having graduated are maintained for seven (7) years from the date they leave the College, after which time they are destroyed.

### **Physical Disabilities/Allergies/Asthma**

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Educational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, an individual with a disability is defined as one who has “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life functions.” Therefore, documentation of a physical disability should include (1) a statement of the impairment and (2) how it limits a major life activity, including but not limited to walking, breathing, seeing, hearing, performing manual tasks, caring for one’s self, learning, and working. A doctor’s statement of the impairment or condition is not sufficient, without the documentation of how that impairment or condition substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the student and an appropriate diagnosis of any medical conditions according to the DSM-IV. In addition to the doctor’s statement, a copy of the most recent Evaluation and testing results will help Gustavus to determine appropriate accommodations. It would also be useful to include the most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan, if the student was educated in the public schools.

Documentation should state the student’s current level of functioning. For disabilities that fluctuate throughout an individual’s life, documentation that is less than three (3) years old is requested. Gustavus requires documented evidence that the requested service or accommodation is appropriate to the needs of the student. Therefore, recommendations for appropriate accommodations are also requested.

### **Mental Disabilities**

Students who have a mental impairment that limits their abilities to function in classrooms or programs may qualify for accommodations. Appropriate documentation of a mental impairment should include a statement of the impairment from a licensed mental health practitioner and, if relevant, a statement of current medication from the prescribing psychiatrist. The report should include summaries of the following:

diagnostic interviews, assessment of the student's mental status (including testing), and DSM-IV diagnosis. A doctor's statement of the impairment or condition is not sufficient without the documentation of how that impairment or condition substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the students. If students have received accommodations in the public schools, a copy of the most recent IEP or 504 plan outlining accommodations is also requested.

### **Learning Disability**

Students applying for services and accommodations on the basis of a learning disability must submit a current, comprehensive report of a psychoeducational assessment performed by a person who has received formal training in assessment techniques necessary to diagnose learning disabilities and has professional experience in that field. The most recent IEP and psychoeducational assessment summary should fulfill these requirements.

The report should include summaries of the following: diagnostic interview, assessment of the student's aptitudes, academic achievement and information processing, and a clear statement of the diagnosis of the specific learning disability, with a full listing of subtest standard scores and percentiles. Language indicating a "learning difficulty" or "learning deficit" will not be considered appropriate documentation.

A list of recommended tests for assessing LD in adults can be requested from the Advising Center.

Students with specific language disabilities who feel that they will be unable to succeed in a foreign language may schedule a meeting with Laurie L. Bickett, the Disability Services Coordinator, to discuss the documentation and determine if it is adequate to justify course substitutions for the foreign language requirements. If the documentation warrants then a petition for course substitutions can be sent to the Registrars Office. You may request a copy of the Gustavus Adolphus College Course Substitution Policy for Foreign Languages in the Advising and Counseling Center.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

Diagnosis of attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity (ADHD) will be accepted only when made by an individual who holds a current license in an appropriate field

(medicine or psychology) and has formal training and experience in assessment of these conditions.

Documentation should include (1) a clear statement of ADD or ADHD with the DSM-IV diagnosis and a description of supporting past and present symptoms, (2) a summary of the assessment procedures and instruments used, (3) a narrative summary that includes scores and supports diagnosis, (4) a statement of the student’s medical needs, including the impact of medication on the student’s ability to meet the demands of an academic environment.

## **Appendix A** . . . . .

### **Tests for Assessing Adolescents and Adults**

The following list is provided as a resource. The list is not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

#### **Aptitude**

- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WIAS-III)
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-III (WISC-III)
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability
- Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Tests
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (4th ed.)

The Slosson Intelligence Test–Revised and the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Tests are considered screening instruments and are not comprehensive enough to provide the type of information necessary to make accommodation decisions.

#### **Academic Achievement**

- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery–Revised: Tests of Achievement
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
- Nelson Denny Reading Skills Test

- Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test
- Test of Written Language-3 (TOWL-3)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests–Revised
- Key-Math

The Wide Range Achievement Test-3 (WRAT-3) is not comprehensive enough to be used as the sole measure of achievement.

### **Information Processing**

A statement of the student's information processing skills is helpful in addition to statements of aptitude and academic achievement.

Information processing can be assessed through instruments such as the Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-3 (DTLA-3) or -Adult (DTLA-A), through the relevant subtests on the WAIS-III, WISC-III, Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery–Revised: Tests of Cognitive ability, or through a discussion of observable behaviors.

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Information in this handbook will be made available in alternative format, such as large print or cassette tape, upon request. Call the Disability Services Coordinator (933-7027).