

Gadsden State Community College
Student Handbook for
Disability Services (ADA)



Disability Services Office (ADA)
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The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is the civil rights guarantee for persons with disabilities in the United States. It provides protection from discrimination for individuals on the basis of disability. The ADA extends civil rights protection for people with disabilities to employment in the private sector, transportation, public accommodations, services provided by state and local government, and telecommunication relay services.

The purpose of the Disability Services Office at Gadsden State Community College is to assist individuals with disabilities with accommodations and services that will promote their success and integration into college and college related activities. The Coordinator works with students, faculty, and staff to ensure equal opportunity to all programs. For credit courses, continuing education, and community events, individuals will be provided equal access.

This handbook will serve as a resource and answer questions that you may have about documentation, accommodations, and policies and procedures. We hope this will assist you as you fulfill your academic career.

Goals for Providing Services to Students with Disabilities

1. To work individually with qualified students with disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations which will allow the student to demonstrate his or her academic capability at Gadsden State.
2. To assist qualified students with disabilities through the transition process from high school to Gadsden State.
3. To work collaboratively with other areas of the College, including faculty, to ensure equal access for all students.

Gadsden State Community College does not perform disability evaluations that determine or diagnose disabilities, nor does Gadsden State pay for such testing. Testing is the responsibility of the student.

Confidentiality of Information

Gadsden State Community College has an obligation to maintain confidentiality of evaluation information and does not release disability documentation. Strict confidentiality is maintained in all verbal communications with Gadsden State faculty and staff unless a student grants written permission or the College required to do so by law or court order.

Information, Policies, & Procedures for Students

The following policies apply to disability services. Registered students should be familiar with those policies that apply to their particular requests.

Classroom Accessibility - Students with mobility or physical impairments that hinder their ability to navigate to class will receive assistance in order to coordinate their classroom locations to accessible spaces.

Early Registration - When applicable, a student with a disability may register during early registration through Disability Services or Student Support Services. The student is still responsible for obtaining advisement with college advisors.

Testing Accommodations - Testing Accommodations - Testing accommodations may include extended time (1.5x or 2x), reduced-distraction testing environment, orally administered tests (including reading-software-administered), and/or scribes. Students should discuss testing accommodations with their instructors at the beginning of each semester. Testing accommodations procedures vary from campus to campus. The procedures are discussed in the intake meeting. Any student with questions about testing accommodations is encouraged to discuss it with the ADA Coordinator or ADA Contact for his or her campus.

Students should discuss testing Specific details are worked out between the student and his or her test proctor. The test proctor will communicate with the instructor in order to ensure that the accommodations are provided efficiently and in accordance with the teacher's requirements for test administration. Some testing is provided through Student Support Services (SSS) offices on the Wallace Drive and Ayers Campuses. Each SSS Office has its own procedures including a form (Ayers) or testing sheet (Wallace Drive) for students to notify the office about upcoming tests. Some departments and individual teachers choose to provide testing accommodations for their students due to a variety of special circumstances.

Alternate Formats for Assignments - In many cases, assignments may be submitted in formats other than those stated in course requirements (i.e., recorded rather than written or typed, and typed rather than hand written).

Recorders / Note takers - Students may be permitted to record class lectures or be assigned a peer note taker as a reasonable accommodation. The peer note taker is normally a volunteer that's identified by the

instructor. The note taker delivers the notes to a predetermined office for the student to pick up. The identity of the student is confidential.

Sign Language Interpreters / CART Captionists - Gadsden State will provide qualified sign language interpreters and CART captionists for deaf or hearing-impaired students.

Readers / Scribes - Text-to-Speech software such as Text-Along is commonly used to provide reading accommodations for exams. However, when appropriate, the College will also provide readers and scribes.

Adaptive Technology – The College provides adaptive technology, free of charge, for students with disabilities unless to do so would prove an undue burden, remove one or more of the essential functions of the class or program, or lower the academic standards of the college. Students may be permitted to use calculators (restrictions apply), word processors, closed circuit televisions (CCTVs), electronic dictionaries, and spell checkers for in-class work. FM Systems are available for loan to students with hearing impairments in order to facilitate classroom communication with instructors and classmates. An Amplified Stethoscope is available for students with hearing impairments who can't hear standard stethoscopes.

Library Access and Assistance - For library users with physical disabilities, reasonable efforts are made to maintain a barrier-free facility. Assistance is available at the Circulation Desk or in any library office. Accommodations for library services or facilities for persons with disabilities are made on a case-by-case basis in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 as amended. Disability Services Office assistive-technology assets related to library access include closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs), screen reader software, magnification software and adjustable height tables. Accommodation requests requiring special equipment or software should be directed to the ADA Coordinator.

Service Animals - In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are permitted on the college campus and in its facilities. Service animals are animals that have been trained to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. To be permitted on campus, a service animal must be specifically trained to perform a service function. 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. The service animal should wear a harness, cape, identification tag, or other gear that readily identifies its working status.

The person using the service animal is responsible for controlling the animal's behavior, caring for the animal, and cleaning up after the animal. A service animal whose behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others may be excluded regardless of training or certification.

Accessible Parking - Accessible parking is available for individuals near the front of each building on campus. The College recognizes permits issued by the state for the use of these areas and may authorize temporary parking passes for students with temporary medical conditions. For more information, contact the ADA Coordinator or a Campus ADA Contact.

Adaptive Equipment and Services Available

For students who qualify, the following equipment/services are currently available. Others will be purchased/installed as needed.

E-Texts (electronic copies of textbooks, restrictions apply)

Calculators (restrictions apply)

TextAloud text-to-speech software

FM Systems (for use by hearing-impaired students)

Sign Language Interpreters and CART Captionists

Readers, Scribes and Note takers

Large print copies of syllabi, tests and handouts

Amplified Stethoscope

Closed-Circuit Televisions (CCTVs, stationary)–screen enlargers for use in libraries, computer labs, classrooms

Scanner (SSS Gadsden)

Braille embosser (SSS Gadsden)

Adjustable Height Tables

Assistive Computer Software

Window-Eyes, ZoomText, Jaws, Scientific Notebook. Most accessibility software is purchased with site-licenses allowing the programs to be installed on any Gadsden State computer when requested by a student with a disability.

TTY/TDD Location

Student Services Office at Ayers Campus, 256-832-1234

Transition to College

Legal Requirements

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in education and public accommodations.
- There must be equal access to all facilities, programs, services, and activities of the college.
- The college is NOT covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which applies to K-12 institutions and requires individualized education plans (IEPs). There is no Special Education in College.

What Is a Disability as Defined by the ADA?

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- What Is a Major Life Activity? Breathing, Seeing, Walking, Working, Hearing, Caring for oneself, Speaking, Learning,

Who Is Covered?

- Protects all persons with a disability from discrimination based solely on a disability in an educational setting.

How do I Receive Accommodations?

- Once accepted as a Gadsden State student, please contact the Disability Services (ADA) Office or a campus ADA Contact and self-identify as a student with a disability by completing the Accommodation Request Form.
- Provide current sufficient documentation of a disability.
- Set up an Intake appointment to review documentation, discuss eligibility and reasonable accommodations.

What about Documentation?

- Who is responsible for providing documentation?
 - Under the ADA and Section 504, it is the student's responsibility to provide adequate documentation of disability in postsecondary settings.
- What Documentation is required?
 - Gadsden State requires that a student provide documentation of his/her disability. A High School IEP, 504 Plan, and/or a letter from a physician or other professional may not be sufficient to document a disability. Documentation should come from a professional qualified to diagnose the disability. The documentation should be less than 3 years old. Documentation that suggests appropriate accommodations for the student is preferred. The ADA Coordinator, or ADA Campus Contact, uses both the documentation presented as well as the Intake Interview to decide whether the documentation is sufficient and complete, as well as whether the accommodations requested are appropriate in light of the documentation and information gleaned during the Intake Interview. Medication cannot be used to imply a diagnosis. The documentation process is usually a one-time event, unless the student requests further accommodations or exits the college for an extended time.

Who Pays for College?

The student is responsible for the costs associated with attending college. The student with a disability does not receive free tuition, or help with books from the college because of the disability. The student may however qualify for financial aid.

Classroom Placement

- IDEA/Special Education - Placement in special classrooms, resource, or regular classroom
- ADA/504 - Placement in regular classroom with accommodations. Some accommodations which are appropriate in high school are not appropriate in college. (Ex: Less choices on a multiple-choice test.) One-on-one instruction is not required in college.

What are Classroom Accommodations?

- Examples:
 1. Extended time for tests/quizzes
 2. Testing in a distraction-reduced environment
 3. Use of a recorder
 4. Use of CCTVs by visually impaired students
 5. Enlarge tests and handouts

Accommodations and Accessibility

- Interpreters, Captionists, textbooks in alternative formats, Readers/Scribes for exams, Buildings/Facilities, Information, Programs & Materials, Activities & Services

Institutions are Not Responsible for personal services such as:

- Attendants, tutors, readers for personal study, typists, nurses
- Personal devices such as hearing aids, wheelchairs, guide dogs, etc.

Plan Ahead

- Choose the college you plan to attend
- Request the requirements for admission
- If admitted, you may contact the Gadsden State Disability Services (ADA) Office or an ADA Campus Contact nearest the campus you plan to attend to set up an appointment. (They are listed on the Campus Contact link of the Disability Services Website.)
- Students needing accommodations on the Compass Placement Test should notify the ADA Coordinator at least two weeks in advance so that accommodations can be arranged in a timely manner, pclough@gadsdenstate.edu; 256-549-8462.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: May colleges deny services if a student refused to document his or her disability?

A: Yes. A college has no obligation to provide services to a student who refused to provide documentation of his or her disability.

Q: Can a college be held liable under the ADA if it is unaware of a student's disability?

A: No. The college's obligation to provide a reasonable accommodation applies only to known disabilities.

Q: Does an institution have any obligation to lower its admissions standards for individuals with disabilities?

A: No. An applicant's disability should play no part in an admission decision and the institution has no obligation to lower its admissions standards to admit an applicant with a disability.

Q: What is the scope of the college's obligation to provide auxiliary aids or services to students with disabilities in the classroom?

A: An educational institution has a duty to provide reasonable accommodations in the classroom for students with known disabilities when services have been requested in a timely manner.

Q: Does a college have any obligation to provide personal services or devices?

A: No. An educational institution is not required to provide a student with a disability with personal or individually prescribed devices.

Q: Must an institution lower its academic standards to accommodate a student with a disability?

A: No. But it should be noted that a college may be required to make some modifications to its academic requirements to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating on the basis of the student's disability.

Q: Does an institution's obligation extend to providing accommodations during a test to a student with a disability?

A: Yes. Reasonable accommodation must be provided if appropriate notice is given.

Q: Must an institution's library materials be accessible to students with disabilities?

A: Yes. The institution has an obligation to ensure that students have effective access to library materials.