

Provision of Services to Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities who have registered with DSS may be entitled to a wide range of services and support, depending on the individual needs of each student. In general, these services are provided at no cost to the student. The College provides accommodations unless they cause a fundamental alteration in the academic standards of the College, or cause undue hardship on the College. Individually prescribed devices, tutors, personal care attendants, readers for personal use, or other study devices of a personal nature are not the responsibility of the College.

Procedure for Providing Services

Students with disabilities must decide for themselves whether they want to identify their disability to DSS; however, students should be aware that it is the policy at Chattanooga State that instructors do not provide accommodations to students on an individual basis unless that instructor has first been notified by DSS that the student is a qualified student with a disability and has registered with DSS.

Once a student decides to self-identify with DSS, he should gather together as much documentation about his disability as he can locate, and make an appointment to meet with one of the professional staff in the DSS office. The student will present the documentation to the DSS staff member, who reviews the information with the student. The DSS staff member will conduct an interview with the student to gain more in-depth understanding of the impact the disability has had on the student's education up to this point.

The staff member, after reviewing the documentation provided by the student and conducting an interview, will discuss accommodations that might be appropriate for each class in which the student is enrolled.

Once the accommodation plan has been developed, students should report any problems with classes or suggested accommodations as soon as the student is aware there is a problem. DSS staff will make every effort to make reasonable adjustments or add additional support services so that the student is able to have full access to the class. An instructor may also make DSS staff aware of problems that a student appears to be having in his or her class, and ask for assistance in providing needed support within the classroom.

It is suggested that students check in regularly with DSS staff to report on progress (good or bad) so that any changes can be made as soon as possible. The student has the right to, and may refuse, any accommodations that have been suggested.

Tutoring

Chattanooga State provides free peer and professional tutoring through the Mathematics Center and the College Reading and Writing Center. In addition, the Career Planning and Counseling office and several academic departments provide free peer tutoring in a variety of areas, including advanced science, business and information systems, and social and behavioral science. DSS will assist students who are clients of Vocational Rehabilitation in locating a tutor if Vocational Rehabilitation will be paying for the tutor. Tutoring services other than these specific cases mentioned above are at the expense of the student, but DSS will be happy to assist the student in locating a tutor, if one is available. The student is responsible for contacting the tutor and setting up a schedule, providing appropriate study materials at each session, and notifying the tutor when he/she will not be able to meet.

Adaptive Equipment

DSS provides adaptive computer equipment in several locations across campus. An Adaptive Computer Lab has

been set up in the DSS offices, and is open to all students with disabilities. The lab is equipped with a variety of equipment that provides needed accommodations/modifications for many different disabilities, such as hands-free operation, voice recognition software, text enlarging software, Internet access with screen reading capabilities, a scanning/reading system, Braille translation and printing software and hardware, and two CCTV's.

Students with mild to moderate hearing loss may borrow a listening system from the DSS office. Students are required to sign a contract each semester in order to check out this equipment.

Also available for loan are tape and digital recorders, talking book players, notetaker keyboards, portable enlarging devices and talking calculators.

Books on Tape or Digital Format

Chattanooga State will apply for individual memberships to Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic for qualified students. Students with visual or learning disabilities may request textbooks on tape each semester. Books must be ordered early, since a two-to-three month turnaround period is necessary to have the tapes here on time. Students may check out specially equipped tape or digital players from the DSS office to take advantage of these tapes. Textbooks can also be ordered in an electronic file format so they can be read aloud on Adobe Reader.

Notetakers

Students with a variety of disabilities may have need of a notetaker in each class. Instructors assist the student in locating another student in the class who agrees to provide a photocopy of his own notes to the student with a disability. Notetakers are sought on a voluntary basis first, but can be paid by DSS if funds are available. Having a notetaker does not relieve the student with a disability from the responsibility of attending class.

Tape and Digital Recorders

Students with disabilities are allowed to use tape or digital recorders in class for personal study use. Instructors are always notified if a student will be bringing a tape recorder to his or her class. Recorded lectures may not be used for any purpose other than for personal study. Recorded lectures may not be used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as a part of the class activity. Instructors who are concerned about copyright infringement may want to develop a contract between himself/herself and the student with a disability who uses a tape recorder in class. Information contained in the recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published without the consent of the lecturer. Students are required to sign a Recorded Lecture Policy before taking a recording device into the classroom.

Test Modifications

A common request for students with disabilities is extended time for test taking. Extended time is allowed on an individual basis, and is always requested in the initial accommodation notification to faculty. Under no circumstances is unlimited time allowed. **A maximum of double time is permitted**, but may be less than this depending on the type and difficulty of test being administered. See additional information on Testing Accommodations for policies and procedures that students must follow.

Another common request is an alternate location for testing. This is worked out between the student, the instructor, and DSS. The most common arrangements are for the student to take a test in the instructor's office, a study room nearby the classroom, or in a campus testing center. Students with visual disabilities may need to use equipment in the Adaptive Computer Lab in order to enlarge the text of the test to a viewable size. Tests are always

appropriately monitored to ensure the student is doing his/her own work.

Interpreters

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and use sign language as their primary means of communication will be provided with an interpreter in all classes and labs. Interpreters' schedules are coordinated each semester to ensure that all classes are covered. Students needing an interpreter for extracurricular activities, special meetings, or other events must file a request with the DSS office as soon as possible. These requests may or may not be filled, depending on the availability of an interpreter at the time requested. In a few cases, it may not be possible to provide an interpreter for a class or lab, due to illness or scheduling conflicts. At those times, the instructor will be notified in advance, and appropriate alternate materials will be provided. The student has the responsibility of notifying the interpreter and DSS if he will not be able to attend class, so that the interpreter can be reassigned or released. After the third absence without notification, the student must meet with the director of DSS to discuss the problem and whether an interpreter is still needed.

Readers, Scribes for Testing

Readers are provided whenever possible for students with visual impairments or a reading disability. Readers are most often DSS staff, but peer readers may be hired if the assignment is on a regular basis.

Scribes are provided for people with visual impairments, motor difficulties, or written language disabilities. Scribes serve as the hands of the student with a disability, and provide no other assistance other than putting on paper what is dictated to him/her by the student with a disability.

In certain cases, a person may serve both as a reader and a scribe, for instance, when reading a test to a student and recording his/her answers.

Volunteer readers and scribes are recruited whenever possible, but DSS may be able to pay for these services, if necessary.

Other Support Services

Since support services are provided to students on an individual basis, this list is not meant to be exhaustive. The college also provides career and personal counseling, academic advising, financial aid advising, job placement and co-op services, and a variety of other services that are available to the general college population. DSS will be happy to coordinate these other services for the student with a disability, if the office is made aware of a need for such services.