

# Academic Accommodations Handbook

The Academic Accommodations Handbook (for students with disabilities) has been developed to provide students with an outline of the services provided by Office of Academic Accommodations. Please familiarize yourself with the information outlined in the Handbook. If you have additional needs, please contact the Office of Academic Accommodations. The Office of Academic Accommodations is committed to providing a community that ensures full participation for students. Academic accommodations are meant to remove barriers that hinder learning, thereby providing an equal opportunity for all students to have academic success. The Office of Academic Accommodations is also a valuable resource for faculty and staff members.

## How Do Students Access Academic Accommodations?

Students with disabilities who wish to access services should contact the Office of Academic Accommodations. Provision of services begins with an intake process during which the functional issues related to the disability are identified, and appropriate strategies, resources, and accommodations are determined.

## How Do Students Qualify for Academic Accommodations?

The Office of Academic Accommodations is committed to serving all students with disabilities as defined by federal regulations. Individuals with temporary disabilities are also served by the Office of Academic Accommodations.

A person with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices; the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers; or the provision of auxiliary aids and services; meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or for the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity.

The federal legal definition of a disability includes a person who:

1. has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more such person's major life activities,
2. has a record of such impairment, or
3. is regarded by others as having such impairment.

A student must provide documentation of his/her disability and his/her need for academic accommodations before receiving services. In the case of a medical, physical, or psychological disability, students should submit documentation from a qualified professional stating the nature and severity of the disability, the current functional impact, the diagnostic procedures used, and recommendations for assistance.

Information obtained is confidential and is used solely to identify appropriate support services (accommodations). Information regarding a student's disability can be released only with permission of the student.

## How Does a Student Obtain Academic Accommodations?

Academic accommodations must be requested by the student each semester. In addition to providing appropriate documentation of his/her disability (as described above), the student must complete a Request for Academic Accommodations form to initiate his/her requests. Requesting academic accommodations should be done prior to or at the beginning of the semester to help ensure timely provision of the necessary accommodations. Upon approval by the Director of Academic Accommodations, a letter listing the student's specific accommodations will be created, and the student should obtain copies of this letter to hand deliver to the appropriate faculty and staff members, at the student's discretion. Consultation with the student, his/her instructor(s), and the Director of the Office of Academic Accommodations may be necessary for some accommodations. Each student is encouraged to act as his/her own advocate and has the primary responsibility for securing assistance. Early and regular contact with the Office of Academic Accommodations will help ensure the timely identification and provision of services and academic accommodations. To start the process contact Rae Ann Warner by phone at [918-293-4855](tel:918-293-4855) or by email at [rae\\_ann.warner@okstate.edu](mailto:rae_ann.warner@okstate.edu).

## What Academic Accommodations Are Available?

The Office of Academic Accommodations will tailor assistance to the needs of the individual student. Services and academic accommodations are designed to remove barriers that hinder learning, thereby allowing maximum independence and success. In other words, academic accommodations are designed to provide each student with equal access to an education. The Director of the Office of Academic Accommodations will base the provision of accommodations on the student's individual need, not on the student's desire or convenience.

Academic accommodations offered, based on individual need, include (but are not limited to):

- note-taking assistance
- alternative testing Accommodations
- assistance in obtaining texts in alternative formats
- interpreter services/CART
- classroom accessibility (table, chair, relocated room)
- accessible parking permits
- equipment loan
- [assistive technology](#)
- [Addendum: Testing & Documentation Standards for Disability Service Providers in Higher Education](#)

### Instructor Notification

To aid students in securing appropriate services, our office provides each student who qualifies for academic accommodations a letter listing that student's specific accommodations. The student must pick up from the Office of Academic Accommodations copies of this letter to hand deliver to his/her instructors, other faculty, and staff members at the student's discretion. Our office also provides instructors with recommendations

for academic accommodations. Students must also identify themselves to their instructor(s) for implementation of the identified classroom accommodations.

### **Note-taking Assistance**

Students may arrange for note-taking assistance by securing a volunteer note taker or by digitally recording lectures. Working with the Office of Academic Accommodations to obtain copies of instructors' lecture notes, as available, is also an alternative.

If the volunteer note-taking option is selected, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Academic Accommodations. A letter will be sent to the student's instructor(s) requesting an in-class volunteer note taker solicitation. It is then the student's responsibility to obtain the volunteer's name and number from the instructor.

If the recording option is selected, and a student does not have a recorder, students may check out a Livescribe smart pen and notebook or a digital recorder from the Office of Academic Accommodations as available. Students are responsible for the return of all equipment and applicable accessories at the conclusion of each semester to avoid being charged for the cost of the equipment.

### **Alternative Testing**

Students with disabilities may request academic accommodations in course examination requirements or formats. Authorized testing accommodations are designed to assist students in demonstrating skills or acquired knowledge rather than the impact of the disabilities.

Students with disabilities requiring exam accommodations must schedule testing through the Office of Academic Accommodations and the LASSO Center.

### **Alternative Format Text Materials**

The Office of Academic Accommodations provides assistance to students in obtaining texts in alternative formats (i.e., e-text, digital recording, braille) and will work with students and publishers to obtain such accessible textbook formats. Students must identify the required texts as soon as possible and provide the Office of Academic Accommodations with proof of purchase of the hard copy (of the textbook) to begin this process. Early identification and requests are important to ensure timely receipt of materials. Priority enrollment is meant for this purpose.

Students may check out equipment to play accessible textbooks or use available Assistive Tech Software. Training on the use of equipment and assistive software is available. Students are responsible for the return of equipment and all related accessories and materials at the conclusion of each semester.

### **Interpreter Services**

In addition to the Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology (OSUIT) full-time deaf interpreter, freelance interpreters/real-time captionists and local agencies are utilized to provide interpreter services. Students requiring an interpreter/real-time captionist must notify the Office of Academic Accommodations as soon as possible of this need. Priority enrollment is meant to assist in early notification. If a student will be absent from a class, the student must notify the Office of Academic Accommodations at least 12 hours in advance of the class time. A "no-show" or a notice of less than 12 hours will be counted as a "miss," except

in extenuating circumstances. Three misses will result in the student's suspension of interpreter/real-time captionist services until the student meets with the OSUIT full-time deaf interpreter or the Director of the Office of Academic Accommodations.

### **Classroom Accessibility**

If a student with a disability enrolls in a course scheduled in an inaccessible location, the student should notify the Office of Academic Accommodations to obtain a change in classroom location.

### **Accessible Parking Permits**

Purchase of a campus parking permit is required for all students, faculty, and staff members. Permanent or temporary University accessible parking permits are available through the OSUIT Campus Police. Students who have a state-issued accessible license plate and/or hang tag on their registered campus vehicle can provide documentation of this fact for purchase of a University accessible parking permit. Both accessible and temporary medical permits are for the absolute and specific use of the permit holder only.

### **Assistive Technology and Software**

The OSUIT Office of Academic Accommodations (OAA) has multiple types of assistive technology and software available for student use. For more information, contact the OAA. at [918-293-4855](tel:918-293-4855) or [rae\\_ann.warner@okstate.edu](mailto:rae_ann.warner@okstate.edu).

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

To ensure personal safety in an emergency situation, the following guidelines should be observed by students with disabilities in advance of an emergency. Students should notify instructors and classmates of the type of assistance he/she anticipates needing during an emergency situation.

In the event of a fire, immediate and complete evacuations are preferred if this can be accomplished in a safe manner. If immediate and complete evacuation is not possible, the student should ask someone to assist him/her in reaching a "safe area," such as an enclosed stairwell, until emergency personnel arrive and complete evacuation. The assisting individual should stay with the student until emergency personnel arrive. In addition, the student should ask a second person to immediately notify emergency personnel of his/her location and the type of assistance required. [See enclosed "Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response Plans for OSUIT"].

In the event of a tornado warning, the student should utilize elevators and proceed to the lowest floor of the building, requesting assistance from instructors or classmates as needed. If elevator use is not possible, then fire evacuation procedures should be followed. Once the student has reached the lowest possible floor, he/she should remain in the corridors away from windows and exterior doors.

### **Complaints**

Students may register complaints regarding physical, programmatic, or attitudinal barriers they encounter at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology by contacting the Director of the Office of Academic Accommodations (OAA).

## Complaint and Grievance Process Information

If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of their complaint through the Office of Academic Accommodations (OAA), the student may choose to move beyond an informal complaint by filing a formal grievance with the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. The student must complete in writing an Academic Affairs Grievance form, obtained from the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, located in the Grady Clack building. Once the student files the Grievance form, the Provost will take the necessary steps to achieve an acceptable outcome.

Students who are not satisfied with the response they receive from the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs may contact any of the following agencies:

### Office of Disability Concerns

2401 NW 23rd, Suite 90  
Oklahoma City, OK 73107-2423  
[800-522-8224](tel:800-522-8224) (v) or [405-521-3756](tel:405-521-3756) (v)  
[405-522-6706](tel:405-522-6706) (tty)  
<http://www.odc.ok.gov>

### Office for Civil Rights

Kansas City Office  
8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037  
Kansas City, MO 64114-3302  
[816-268-0550](tel:816-268-0550) (v)  
[877-521-2172](tel:877-521-2172) (tty)  
<http://www.ed.gov/ocr>

### U. S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Civil Rights Division  
Disability Rights Section –NYA  
Washington, D.C. 20530  
[800-514-0301](tel:800-514-0301) (v)  
[800-514-0383](tel:800-514-0383) (tty)  
<https://www.justice.gov/>

## Addendum: Testing & Documentation Standards for Disability Service Providers in Higher Education

Standards and practices regarding how people are diagnosing Learning Disabilities (LD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD-with and without hyperactivity) still vary widely. For service providers in higher education it is a concern nationally. In addition to identifying the presence of a disability, the documentation is utilized to establish a "substantial limitation" to learning (due to the disability) as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and to aid in determining appropriate accommodations. Having a disability diagnosis does not necessarily entitle a person to, nor require, accommodations. The presence of a disability and the fact that it "substantially limits one or more major life activity (e.g. learning)" establishes such a need. These are the criteria used in providing services in postsecondary education.

While it is not practical or desirable to create specific protocols for documenting every possible condition that might be considered a disability, it is helpful to provide a clearer understanding in the preferred profiles for the more common conditions. The “Seven Essential Elements of Quality Disability Documentation” noted below provides that direction in order to:

- help ensure that all documentation guidelines are consistent,
- offer direction for the case-by-case review of documentation that does not fit the established protocol for a specific disability,
- clarify specific guidelines for diagnosticians, and
- provide information to individuals seeking services.

Preferred documentation is more helpful when it describes the condition, validates the need for academic accommodation(s) AND includes information to support educational planning. It also should anticipate accommodation needs in new contexts and facilitate referrals to outside services and agencies.

Disability documentation for the purpose of providing academic accommodations must both establish disability and provide adequate information on the functional impact of the disability so that effective accommodations can be identified.

All documentation should be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis, examining the impact of the disability on the individual and within the specific context of the request for academic accommodations. There is no list of covered disabilities or accepted diagnostic criteria. OSUIT’s documentation policy is flexible, allowing for the consideration of alternative methods and sources of documentation, as long as the essential goal of adequately describing the current impact of the disability is met.

Determination of a disability does not require the use of any specific language. Clinicians’ training or philosophical approaches may result in their use of euphemistic phrases, rather than specific diagnostic labels; this practice should not be automatically interpreted to suggest that a disability does or does not exist.

Presented documentation can be augmented through interview. The Office of Academic Accommodations may contact the evaluator, as necessary, for clarification of any information (test results, conclusions, recommendations, etc.) contained in documentation. An interview, filtered by the professional judgment, is extremely valuable in substantiating the existence of a disability, understanding its impacts and identifying appropriate accommodations.

Determination of accommodations is an interactive process. The individual with a disability is an excellent source of information on strategies that maximize access. In the context of documentation and accommodation planning, the individual is a rich, reliable, and valid source of information on the impact of the disability and the effectiveness of academic accommodations. The individual may be provided with his/her first choice of academic accommodation or an alternative, effective accommodation determined by the institution. While objective confirmation (documentation) is legitimate, so are the lived experiences of individuals.

Documentation of a specific disability does not translate directly into specific academic accommodations. Reasonable academic accommodations are individually determined and should be based on the functional impact of the condition and its likely interaction with the environment (course assignments, program requirements, physical design, etc.). As such, academic accommodation

recommendations may vary (for) individuals with the “same” disability diagnosis and from environment to environment for the same individual.

Disability documentation should be treated in a confidential manner and shared only on a need-to-know basis. Disability-related information will be collected and maintained in the Office of Academic Accommodations in secure files with limited access.

Information on the individual’s disability is only one component of providing access. Many barriers to full participation reside in the environment (physical, curricular, attitudinal, informational) where proactive redesign can favorably impact sustainable access. The Office of Academic Accommodations works to increase overall accessibility through system change that makes the institution more inclusive and reduces the need for individual accommodation.

### **Seven Essential Elements of Quality Disability Documentation:**

1. The credentials of the evaluator(s)
2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability
3. A description of the diagnostic methodology used
4. A description of the current functional limitations While relatively recent documentation is recommended in most circumstances, common sense and discretion in accepting older documentation of conditions that are permanent or non-varying is recommended. It is important to remember that documentation is not time-bound; the need for recent documentation depends on the facts and circumstances of the individual’s condition.
5. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability
6. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications
7. Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services