

University of South Alabama



SPECIAL STUDENT SERVICES Student Handbook

**Student Center Room 270
Mobile, Alabama 36688**

Mission Statement

Embracing the University of South Alabama's general mission that emphasizes teaching excellence while encouraging research, creative work, and service to the University and the community, Special Student Services enhances this mission for students with disabilities. Special Student Services' philosophy is to provide an education for individuals with disabilities through equal access, empowerment, support, resources, advocacy, collaboration and outreach throughout the University and community.

In addition to providing services and accommodations to students with disabilities as mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Special Student Services works closely with faculty and staff in an advisory capacity and assists in the development of reasonable accommodations that allow students with disabilities to fully participate in all of the programs offered on campus.

Alternative format available upon request

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Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

**U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Washington, D.C. 20202**

May 2005

More and more high school students with disabilities are planning to continue their education in postsecondary schools, including vocational and career schools, two- and four-year colleges, and universities. As a student with a disability, you need to be well informed about your rights and responsibilities as well as the responsibilities that postsecondary schools have toward you. Being well informed will help ensure that you have a full opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the postsecondary education experience without confusion or delay.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education is providing the information in this pamphlet to explain the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities who are preparing to attend postsecondary schools. This pamphlet also explains the obligations of a postsecondary school to provide academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Practically every school district and postsecondary school in the United States is subject to one or both of these laws, which have similar requirements.*/

Because both school districts and postsecondary schools must comply with these same laws, you and your parents might believe that postsecondary schools and school districts have the same responsibilities. This is not true; the responsibilities of postsecondary schools are significantly different from those of school districts.

Moreover, you will have responsibilities as a postsecondary student that you do not have as a high school student. OCR strongly encourages you to know your responsibilities and those of postsecondary schools under Section 504 and Title II. Doing so will improve your opportunity to succeed as you enter postsecondary education.

The following questions and answers provide more specific information to help you succeed.

As a student with a disability leaving high school and entering postsecondary education, will I see differences in my rights and how they are addressed?

Yes. Section 504 and Title II protect elementary, secondary and postsecondary students from discrimination. Nevertheless, several of the requirements that apply through high school are different from the requirements that apply beyond high school. For instance, Section 504 requires a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in the district's jurisdiction. Whatever the disability, a school district must identify an individual's education needs and provide any regular or special education and related aids and services necessary to meet those needs as well as it is meeting the needs of students without disabilities.

Unlike your high school, your postsecondary school is not required to provide FAPE. Rather, your postsecondary school is required to provide appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability. In addition, if your postsecondary school provides housing to nondisabled students, it must provide comparable, convenient and accessible housing to students with disabilities at the same cost.

Other important differences you need to know, even before you arrive at your postsecondary school, are addressed in the remaining questions.

May a postsecondary school deny my admission because I have a disability?

No. If you meet the essential requirements for admission, a postsecondary school may not deny your admission simply because you have a disability.

Do I have to inform a postsecondary school that I have a disability?

No. However, if you want the school to provide an academic adjustment, you must identify yourself as having a disability. Likewise, you should let the school know about your disability if you want to ensure that you are assigned to accessible facilities. In any event, your disclosure of a disability is always voluntary.

What academic adjustments must a postsecondary school provide?

The appropriate academic adjustment must be determined based on your disability and individual needs. Academic adjustments may include auxiliary aids and modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure equal educational opportunity. Examples of such adjustments are arranging for priority registration; reducing a course load; substituting one course for another; providing note takers, recording devices, sign language interpreters, extended time for testing and, if telephones are provided in dorm rooms, a TTY in your dorm room; and equipping school computers with screen-reading, voice recognition or other adaptive software or hardware.

In providing an academic adjustment, your postsecondary school is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements. For example,

although your school may be required to provide extended testing time, it is not required to change the substantive content of the test. In addition, your postsecondary school does not have to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity or would result in undue financial or administrative burdens. Finally, your postsecondary school does not have to provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

If I want an academic adjustment, what must I do?

You must inform the school that you have a disability and need an academic adjustment. Unlike your school district, your postsecondary school is not required to identify you as having a disability or assess your needs.

Your postsecondary school may require you to follow reasonable procedures to request an academic adjustment. You are responsible for knowing and following these procedures. Postsecondary schools usually include, in their publications providing general information, information on the procedures and contacts for requesting an academic adjustment. Such publications include recruitment materials, catalogs and student handbooks, and are often available on school Web sites. Many schools also have staff whose purpose is to assist students with disabilities. If you are unable to locate the procedures, ask a school official, such as an admissions officer or counselor.

When should I request an academic adjustment?

Although you may request an academic adjustment from your postsecondary school at any time, you should request it as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. You should follow your school's procedures to ensure that your school has enough time to review your request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment.

Do I have to prove that I have a disability to obtain an academic adjustment?

Generally, yes. Your school probably will require you to provide documentation that shows you have a current disability and need an academic adjustment.

What documentation should I provide?

Schools may set reasonable standards for documentation. Some schools require more documentation than others. They may require you to provide documentation prepared by an appropriate professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist or other qualified diagnostician. The required documentation may include one or more of the following: a diagnosis of your current disability; the date of the diagnosis; how the diagnosis was reached; the credentials of the professional; how your disability

affects a major life activity; and how the disability affects your academic performance. The documentation should provide enough information for you and your school to decide what is an appropriate academic adjustment.

Although an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, if you have one, may help identify services that have been effective for you, it generally is not sufficient documentation. This is because postsecondary education presents different demands than high school education, and what you need to meet these new demands may be different. Also in some cases, the nature of a disability may change.

If the documentation that you have does not meet the postsecondary school's requirements, a school official must tell you in a timely manner what additional documentation you need to provide. You may need a new evaluation in order to provide the required documentation.

Who has to pay for a new evaluation?

Neither your high school nor your postsecondary school is required to conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document your disability and need for an academic adjustment. This may mean that you have to pay or find funding to pay an appropriate professional to do it. If you are eligible for services through your state vocational rehabilitation agency, you may qualify for an evaluation at no cost to you. You may locate your state vocational rehabilitation agency through this Department of Education Web page: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html>

Once the school has received the necessary documentation from me, what should I expect?

The school will review your request in light of the essential requirements for the relevant program to help determine an appropriate academic adjustment. It is important to remember that the school is not required to lower or waive essential requirements. If you have requested a specific academic adjustment, the school may offer that academic adjustment or an alternative one if the alternative also would be effective. The school may also conduct its own evaluation of your disability and needs at its own expense.

You should expect your school to work with you in an interactive process to identify an appropriate academic adjustment. Unlike the experience you may have had in high school, however, do not expect your postsecondary school to invite your parents to participate in the process or to develop an IEP for you.

What if the academic adjustment we identified is not working?

Let the school know as soon as you become aware that the results are not what you expected. It may be too late to correct the problem if you wait until the course or

activity is completed. You and your school should work together to resolve the problem.

May a postsecondary school charge me for providing an academic adjustment?

No. Furthermore, it may not charge students with disabilities more for participating in its programs or activities than it charges students who do not have disabilities.

What can I do if I believe the school is discriminating against me?

Practically every postsecondary school must have a person—frequently called the Section 504 Coordinator, ADA Coordinator, or Disability Services Coordinator—who coordinates the school's compliance with Section 504 or Title II or both laws. You may contact this person for information about how to address your concerns.

The school also must have grievance procedures. These procedures are not the same as the due process procedures with which you may be familiar from high school. However, the postsecondary school's grievance procedures must include steps to ensure that you may raise your concerns fully and fairly and must provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints.

School publications, such as student handbooks and catalogs, usually describe the steps you must take to start the grievance process. Often, schools have both formal and informal processes. If you decide to use a grievance process, you should be prepared to present all the reasons that support your request.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome from using the school's grievance procedures or you wish to pursue an alternative to using the grievance procedures, you may file a complaint against the school with OCR or in a court. You may learn more about the OCR complaint process from the brochure *How to File a Discrimination Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights*, which you may obtain by contacting us at the addresses and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/howto.html>.

If you would like more information about the responsibilities of postsecondary schools to students with disabilities, read the OCR brochure *Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Higher Education's Obligations Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA*. You may obtain a copy by contacting us at the address and phone numbers below, or at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>.

Students with disabilities who know their rights and responsibilities are much better equipped to succeed in postsecondary school. We encourage you to work with the staff at your school because they, too, want you to succeed. Seek the support of family, friends and fellow students, including those with disabilities. Know your

talents and capitalize on them, and believe in yourself as you embrace new challenges in your education.

To receive more information about the civil rights of students with disabilities in education institutions, contact us at:

Customer Service Team
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education

Washington, D.C. 20202-1100
Phone: 1-800-421-3481
TDD: 1- 877-521-2172
Email: ocr@ed.gov
Web site: www.ed.gov/ocr

*/ You may be familiar with another federal law that applies to the education of students with disabilities—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). That law is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education. The IDEA and its Individualized Education Program (IEP) provisions do not apply to postsecondary schools. This pamphlet does not discuss the IDEA or state and local laws that may apply.

ADMISSION TO USA

The Office of Admissions handles all applications for undergraduate and graduate admission. Admission standards are described in the USA Bulletin and must be met by all students, including students with disabilities. Admissions is located in the Administration Building Room 182. Contact the Office of Admissions at 460-6141. All information regarding disabilities should be sent to Special Student Services, not to the Office of Admissions.

The Office of New Student Orientation provides programs for incoming students. Students with disabilities are encouraged to visit Special Student Services during orientation. Students who may need accommodations during orientation should contact New Student Orientation at 460-7093. The New Student Orientation office is located in Mitchell College of Business Room 119.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Assistive Computer Technology

Assistive computer technology is available in the Special Student Services computer lab. The lab is wheelchair accessible and contains text-to-voice software, text scanning equipment, screen readers and magnifiers.

Campus Accessibility

Students are responsible for notifying Special Student Services if a classroom, activity, or program is not accessible. Special Student Services is responsible for arranging appropriate accommodations.

Career Services

Career Services assist students and alumni by providing educational and career resources and advising. Part-time, full-time, internship, and cooperative education positions may be available through Career Services. Contact Career Services at 460-6188. Career Services is located at 6420 Old Shell Road.

Counseling

University Counseling Service is a comprehensive developmental/mental health center providing a full range of services to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff. The Counseling Center is staffed by Licensed Professional Counselors who are available to assist students with personal, academic, and vocational concerns. Individual counseling, group counseling, and educational materials are available. The Counseling Center is located in Alpha Hall East room 236. Contact the Center at 460-7051.

Disability Services (Special Student Services)

Special Student Services is the primary resource for USA students with disabilities. Services for students focus on providing academic accommodations, while promoting student responsibility and self-advocacy. Special Student Services is located in Room 270 of the Student Center.

Phone	460-7212
Fax	460-6157
Email	specialstudents@usouthal.edu

Mailing address:

Special Student Services
307 N University Blvd
SC Rm 270
Mobile, AL 36688

Students who choose not to self-identify when they enter USA may identify themselves and receive accommodations at any time during their USA career. **USA is not obligated to provide services for students with disabilities until students register with Special Student Services and request accommodations.**

Financial Aid

Office of Financial Aid offers grants, loans, scholarships, and work-study for eligible students. Students with disabilities are eligible for the same financial assistance as other students: there are no federal financial aid programs specifically for students with disabilities. The Financial Aid Office is located in the Administration Building Room 260. Contact Financial Aid at 460-6231.

Housing

Student Housing provides a variety of housing options for USA students. Students should apply for campus housing as early as possible if they have special housing needs, and indicate any special needs on the Student Housing Application. Contact Housing at 460-6185. The Housing office is located in Delta Commons.

Library Access and Assistance

University of South Alabama Libraries provide students, faculty and staff with access to library collections and services. Services may include retrieval of materials, photocopying assistance, library orientation, special checkout arrangements, and extended loan periods. Main Campus: Handicapped parking spaces are located by the loading dock on the West side of the library. A ramp on the dock leads to the West entrance. Handicapped spaces are also available in the North parking lot near the sidewalk. For hours of operation and additional information, please contact 460-7028.

Math Labs

The Math Department has two computer labs, located in ILB (Instructional Laboratory Building) 405 and ILB 245. The department offers extensive tutoring and computer assistance for MA 112, MA 113, MA 115, and ST 210. The schedule for

tutoring can be found on the Math Department website located at <http://www.southalabama.edu/mathstat>, or contact 460-6264.

Parking & Transportation Services

Persons requiring temporary special parking arrangements may obtain an application for special parking from Special Student Services. Proof of disability will be required. The special parking permit will allow parking in any available faculty/staff space. Handicapped spaces are off limits. Handicapped students may obtain permits to park in handicapped spaces. Applications may be obtained from Special Student Services. Students must show handicapped placard which is registered in the student's name or handicap vehicle license tag number registered to the student. Specific parking questions may be addressed to the University Police Office located at 20 Faculty Court South or contact 461-1481.

Student Health Services

Student Health Services provides medical care for USA students, including the prevention of illness, treatment of disease or injury, and counseling and advice. Appointments are encouraged, but emergencies are seen immediately. Students pay the Student Health fee with registration each semester. Student Health Services is located in Suite 1200 of the Health Services Building. For additional information or to schedule an appointment, contact 460-7151.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is not a proofreading service. It is a teaching center, and its tutors are called consultants. Writing consultants focus on the writer rather than the writing, with the goal of teaching concepts to students. Instead of simply editing student writing, the consultants help students learn techniques and strategies to improve their own writing skills. The Writing Center is located in rooms 203-208 of Alpha Hall East, with room 207 serving as the central office. To schedule an appointment with a writing consultant, call the Writing Center at 460-6480.

DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations from USA must submit documentation of their disability to Special Student Services. Detailed guidelines for documentation of disabilities are located in this handbook and on the Special Student Services website at <http://www.southalabama.edu/dss>. These guidelines should be provided to the person or agency responsible for conducting the evaluation. Documentation costs are the student's responsibility.

Special Student Services cannot accept documentation that is more than three years old (one year for psychiatric disabilities). Usually, documentation accepted by Special Student Services is valid as long as the student is continuously enrolled at USA. However, updated documentation may be requested if a student leaves USA and returns, or if a student experiences a significant change in physical, mental, or social situation.

Confidentiality of Information

Special Student Services is the only USA office that has access to documentation and information related to students' disabilities. Documentation is confidential. In addition, confidentiality is maintained in all verbal conversations between Special Student Services staff members and students. Generally, no information is released to anyone outside of Special Student Services without students' informed and written consent. Special Student Services may release information to USA officials if there is a direct threat to the health or safety of USA students, faculty, and/or staff. Documentation is destroyed seven years after the last semester students are enrolled at USA.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

All reports should be typed on letterhead, dated and signed.

A High School IEP, 504 Plan, and /or a letter from a physician or other professional will not be sufficient to document a learning disability. Medication cannot be used to imply a diagnosis.

The following must be included in a report:

- I. **Qualifications of the Evaluator** – The evaluator’s name, title, and license/certificate credentials must be stated.
- II. **Current Documentation** – Evaluation data must be no more than three years old.
- III. **Evidence of early impairment** - The condition must have been exhibited in childhood in one or more settings. Please include a brief academic history.
- IV. **Evidence of current impairment** - In addition to the individual’s history, documentation of current difficulties must include the student’s clinically significant impairment in current social, academic, or occupational functioning. Must include evidence of impairment in two or more settings. Please include a description of how this individual is functionally limited in the classroom.
- V. **Historical Information, Diagnostic Interview, Psychological Evaluation**
 - a. Developmental history, including history of symptoms
 - b. Duration and severity of the disorder
 - c. Relevant, developmental, historical, and familial data
 - d. Behavioral Assessment Instruments for ADHD normed on adults; these should include at least two ratings scales (with scores and summary data) completed by individuals other than parents (preferably teachers).
- VI. **Neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessments** - Such assessments are necessary to determine the current impact of the disorder on the individual’s ability to function in an academic setting. Data should include subtest and standard scores to support conclusions, and should at least include most recent versions of a comprehensive intelligence battery and a comprehensive achievement battery. (Note: Assessments such as checklist and rating scales are very important, but checklists, scales or subtest scores should not be used as the sole criterion for a diagnosis of ADHD.)

All reports must include an interpretation of test results. Test protocol sheets, handwritten summary sheets or scores alone are not sufficient.

Acceptable instruments – Aptitude / Cognitive ability

- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III (or latest version). The WAIS is the preferred instrument
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery – Revised: Test of Cognitive Ability
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale

Unacceptable instruments – Aptitude / Cognitive ability

- The Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT) is not a comprehensive measure and is therefore not suitable for documentation purposes at USA
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) – this instrument is not standardized for use with adults

Acceptable instruments – Academic Achievement

- The Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery – Revised: Test of Achievement
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
- Standard Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Specific achievement tests such as Test of Written Language – 3 (TOWL-3), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests – Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test

Unacceptable instruments – Academic Achievements

- The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)
- Mini-Battery of Achievement (These are not comprehensive measures of achievement and are therefore not suitable for documentation purposes at USA)

- VII. **Diagnosis** - A clear and specific statement that the student is diagnosed with ADHD and the **accompanying DSM-IV-TR code(s)** are required. Must include DSM-IV-TR criteria upon which this diagnosis was established. Alternative explanations and diagnoses must be ruled out.
- VIII. **Medication** - Indicate whether or not the student is diagnosed while on medication, and whether or not the prescribed treatment produced a positive response. Medication alone cannot be used to support a diagnosis.
- IX. **Recommendations for Accommodations** – The report must include specific recommendations for academic accommodations and the rationale for those accommodations. A history of accommodations does not, in itself, warrant the provision of similar accommodations

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS LEARNING DISABILITY

All reports should be typed on letterhead, dated and signed.

A High School IEP, 504 Plan, and /or a letter from a physician or other professional will not be sufficient to document a learning disability. Medication cannot be used to imply a diagnosis.

The following must be included in a report:

- I. **Qualifications of the Evaluator** – The evaluator’s name, title, and license/certificate credentials must be stated.

- II. **Current Documentation** – Evaluation data must be no more than three years old.

- III. **Academic History** – Academic history documenting impact of learning disability.

- IV. **Neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessments** - Data should include subtest and standard scores to support conclusions, and should at least include **most recent versions** of a *comprehensive intelligence battery* **and** a *comprehensive achievement battery*.

*All reports must include an interpretation of test results. Test protocol sheets, handwritten summary sheets or scores alone are **not** sufficient.*

Acceptable instruments – Aptitude / Cognitive ability

- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III (or latest version). The WAIS is the preferred instrument
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery – Revised: Test of Cognitive Ability
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale

Unacceptable instruments – Aptitude / Cognitive ability

- The Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT) is not a comprehensive measure and is therefore not suitable for documentation purposes at USA
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) – this instrument is not standardized for use with adults

Acceptable instruments – Academic Achievement

- The Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery – Revised: Test of Achievement
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
- Standard Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Specific achievement tests such as Test of Written Language – 3 (TOWL-3), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests – Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test

Unacceptable instruments – Academic Achievements

- The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)
- Mini-Battery of Achievement (These are not comprehensive measures of achievement and are therefore not suitable for documentation purposes at USA.)

- V. **Functional Limitations** - Defined levels of functioning, limitations, and recommendations supported by evaluation data.
- VI. **Diagnosis** – DSM-IV-TR code and clearly stated diagnosis of a learning disability based upon DSM-IV-TR criteria and supported by several subtest scores which show a significant discrepancy AND are at least approaching one SD below the mean of the test (in most cases, the mean is 100 with a SD of 15).
- VII. **Recommendations for Accommodations** - The report must include specific recommendations for academic accommodations and the rationale for those accommodations. A history of accommodations does not, in itself, warrant the provision of similar accommodations at USA.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS MOBILITY, SENSORY, AND SYSTEMIC DISORDERS

All reports should be typed on letterhead, dated and signed.

- I. **Qualifications of the Evaluator** – The evaluator’s name, title, and license/certificate credentials must be stated.

- II. **Current Documentation** – Evaluation data must be no more than three years old.

- III. **History to Support Diagnosis** – A description of the duration and severity of the disorder must be included. In addition, date of diagnosis, last contact with the individual, and approximate date of onset should be included.

- IV. **Assessment of Mobility, Sensory, and/or Systemic Disorder** – A description of current symptoms and current treatments must be included. If the student is taking any medication related to the disability, the evaluator should describe the impact of that medication on the student’s ability to participate in an academic environment.

- V. **Diagnosis** – A SPECIFIC statement that the student is diagnosed with a particular disorder, including the DSM-IV-TR or ICD-10 diagnostic (numeral) code, is required.

- VI. **Substantial Limitation to Learning** – Mobility, sensory, or systemic disability must limit a major life activity, such as walking, learning, seeing, or sleeping, and there must be a significant limitation relative to what is common to the ‘average’ person. The evaluator must describe the major life activity affected by the disability and describe how the disability presents a substantial limitation to academic performance.

- VII. **Recommendations for Accommodations** – The report must include specific recommendations for academic accommodations and the rationale for those accommodations. A history of accommodations does not, in itself, warrant the provision of similar accommodations at USA.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

All report should be typed on letterhead, dated and signed.

- I. **Qualifications of the Evaluator** – The evaluator’s name, title, and license/certificate credentials must be stated.

- II. **Current Documentation** – Evaluation data must be no more than one year old.

- III. **History to Support Diagnosis** – A description of the duration and severity of the disorder must be included. In addition, relevant medical, familial, and social histories should be included.

- IV. **Assessment of Psychiatric Disorders** – The evaluator should include specific evaluation data to support a diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder. Results of standardized assessments, rating scales, or checklists are important, but need not be the sole criterion for a diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder. A description of current symptoms and current treatments must be included. If the student is taking any medication related to the disability, the evaluator should describe the impact of that medication on the student’s ability to participate in an academic environment.

- V. **DSM-IV-TR or ICD-10 Diagnosis** – A SPECIFIC statement that the student is diagnosed with a particular disorder, including the DSM-IV-TR or ICD-10 diagnostic (numeral) code, is required.

- VI. **Substantial Limitation to Learning** – A psychiatric disability must limit a major life activity, such as learning, sleeping, or working, and there must be a significant limitation relative to what is common to the ‘average’ person. The evaluator must describe the major life activity affected by the psychiatric disability and describe how the disability presents a substantial limitation to academic performance.

- VII. **Recommendations for Accommodations** – The report must include specific recommendations for academic accommodations and the rationale for those accommodations. A history of accommodations does not, in itself, warrant the provision of similar accommodations at USA.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

All reports should be typed on letterhead, dated and signed.

- I. **Qualifications of the Evaluator** – The evaluator’s name, title, and license/certificate credentials must be stated.

- II. **Current Documentation** – Evaluation data must be no more than three years old.

- III. **History to Support Diagnosis** – A description of the duration and severity of the injury must be included. In addition, date of diagnosis, last contact with the individual, approximate date of onset, and symptoms should be included.

- IV. **Assessment of Cognitive Abilities and Educational Achievement** – The evaluator should provide an assessment of the student’s cognitive abilities, including processing speed and memory (post-rehabilitation and within one year). Also, standard scores from individually administered, standardized achievement tests must be reported. The evaluator should assess reading comprehension, written language, spelling, and mathematical abilities. If the student is taking any medication related to the disability, the evaluator should describe the impact of that medication on the student’s ability to participate in a college environment.

- V. **DSM-IV-TR or ICD-10 Diagnosis** – A SPECIFIC statement that the student is diagnosed with a neurological injury, including the DSM-IV or ICD-10 diagnostic (numeral) code, is required.

- VI. **Substantial Limitation to Learning** – The disability must limit a major life activity, such as walking, learning, or working, and there must be a significant limitation relative to what is common to the ‘average’ person. The evaluator must describe the major life activity affected by the disability and describe how the disability presents a substantial limitation to academic performance.

- VII. **Recommendations for Accommodations** – The report must include specific recommendations for academic accommodations and the rationale for those accommodations. A history of accommodations does not, in itself, warrant the provision of similar accommodations at USA.

ACCOMMODATIONS REQUESTS

Accommodations are provided on a semester-by-semester basis. Special Student Services prepares a letter addressed to the instructor of each class for which students request accommodations. Students are responsible for requesting accommodation letters from Special Student Services at the beginning of each semester, delivering these letters to instructors, and scheduling the requested accommodations with instructors throughout the semester. Students may request accommodation letters at any time during the semester, but instructors are not obliged to provide accommodations until they receive official accommodation letters from students. Finally, students are responsible for reporting to Special Student Services any concerns about implementation of accommodations.

Receiving academic accommodations at USA is a 4-step procedure:

1. Students obtain accommodations letters from Special Student Services at the beginning of each semester.
2. Students hand-deliver accommodations letter to each instructor.
3. Students contact each instructor several days before accommodations such as extended test time and reduced distraction testing are needed. Students must complete a test accommodations request form two days prior to examination. NOTE: Requests for final exams must be received one week prior to exam.
4. Students report any concerns about accommodations to Special Student Services as soon as possible.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Special Student Services may recommend the following academic accommodations based upon **appropriate documentation** and individual class requirements.

Academic Aids

Students may use calculators, dictionaries, word processors, spell checkers, and/or grammar checkers for in-class work.

Priority Registration

All students registered with Special Student Services are eligible for priority registration. Special Student Services does not advise students on curriculum and course selection. Academic advisors are listed in the USA Class Schedule on the *Registration Contacts* page.

Reading Assistance

Students may request readers, text-to-voice computer software, and/or Books on Tape. Text-to-voice software is available in the Special Student Services computer lab.

Sign Language Interpreting

Deaf and hard of hearing students may be provided with state licensed/permitted interpreters for class sessions, class-related activities, and USA-related events.

Tape Recording, Note Taking Assistance, and Scribes

Students may tape record class lectures and/or request peer note takers. Special Student Services can provide tape recorders for students and carbonless paper for note takers. Special Student Services can provide scribes for students requiring such assistance.

Testing Accommodations

Testing accommodations may include extended time (time & half to double time), reduced-distraction testing situations, and/or alternate test formats (such as Braille or orally administered tests). Tests are administered in each department, whenever possible.

Services of a personal nature are not considered academic accommodations. Examples of personal services include tutoring, transportation, and attendant care.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Questions and concerns regarding accommodations and services for students with disabilities should be directed first to Special Student Services. If the Special Student Services staff members cannot resolve an issue, a meeting with the student, the instructor (if appropriate), the Special Student Services Director, and the Dean of Students may be requested. If an agreement is not reached at this point, the student may file a formal, written appeal. The appeal should clearly describe the complaint in detail, and should be transmitted as a confidential document to:

Vice President of Student Affairs
307 N University Blvd. SC Rm 270
Mobile, Alabama 36688

During the grievance process, students are entitled to receive all accommodations recommended by Special Student Services. It is important that concerns are addressed promptly so that the student's participation in courses is not affected.

Steps in the Grievance Process

1. Consult with Special Student Services staff members.
2. If the situation is not resolved in step 1, meet with the instructor (if appropriate), the Director of Special Student Services, and the Dean of Students.
3. If the situation is not resolved in step 2, submit a formal, written appeal to the Vice President of Student Affairs.

If a complaint is not resolved through the USA Grievance Process, students may file a formal complaint with the regional Office for Civil Rights in Atlanta, Georgia. The Office of Civil Rights investigates complaints alleging violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

(The area code is 251)

Special Student Services	460-7212
Admissions Office	460-6141
Career Services	460-6188
Counseling & Testing Services	460-6271
Financial Aid	460-6231
Graduate School	460-6310
Housing	460-6185
Library	460-7028
Math Department	460-6264
Parking Services	461-1481
Student Health Services	460-7151
Writing Center	460-6480

