



COLLEGE of
CENTRAL
FLORIDA

Students with Disabilities

Manual

Prepared by the Office of Accessibility and Counseling Services
CF.edu/Disability

—an equal opportunity college—

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Mission Statement

The Accessibility and Counseling Center offers a wide range of services and resources for incoming and current students with disabilities. We help students engage in courses, programs, services and activities of CF. We provide coaching, advising, support, programs and resources to help you overcome obstacles, build confidence, self-advocate and attain success.

Arrangements can be made to meet with students, staff or faculty at any of the college's locations.

The ACC partners with students, faculty, staff and the community for student success. It is all about providing students with the resources they need to reach their potential and achieve their goals. The college is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and full participation in all college activities, programs and services for students with disabilities.

Our services include:

- assistance with admissions and financial aid applications
- appropriate classroom and testing accommodations
- academic, career and personal coaching
- sign language interpreters
- adapted computer access
- cultural programming

Federal Mandates and Laws Governing the Office of Accessibility Services

The Accessibility and Counseling Center provides assistance to CF students in compliance with federal mandates regarding individuals with disabilities.

There are several major laws that protect and define the rights of those with disabilities throughout the U.S. The first is the **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**, which prevents discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA mandates that public areas, including public schools and universities, cannot discriminate and must provide reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities.

The second law is **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, which prevents any program or activity that receives federal funding from excluding individuals who are still qualified to participate. Since federal funding is quite pervasive, particularly through education, this applies to a huge variety of programs and institutions.

There are also other laws that may be relevant to students with disabilities. The **Assistive Technology Act** exists to promote the use of and access to "assistive technologies," which range from wheelchairs to hearing aids to accessibility adaptations in public spaces, such as grab bars and ramps. The intention is to allow Americans with disabilities of all ages and at all stages of life to more fully participate in society. The **Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** protects the privacy of a student's educational

records, providing rights to parents and students, once they turn 18. Students of age and their parents have the right to access education records maintained by the schools they attend, the right to request changes to those records, the right to control whether records are disclosed (with consent), and the right to lodge complaints against a school should they violate the protections enshrined in FERPA.

Who is Eligible?

The College of Central Florida provides services to all qualified students with disabilities as defined by law. Section 504 and the ADA both define disabilities in a similar way. An individual with a disability is defined as anyone who has a physical or mental impairment that affects major life activities, has documentation proving such and would generally be regarded as impaired by others. Both the ADA and Section 504 protect students from discrimination, both during the admissions process and while attending, although students who need accommodations are responsible for identifying themselves to the school's office of disability services.

Responsibilities

Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:

- meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, activities and facilities;
- identify as an individual with a disability when an academic adjustment is needed and seek information, counsel and assistance as necessary;
- provide appropriate documentation of the disability and how it limits participation in courses, programs, services, activities and facilities;
- follow established procedures for obtaining reasonable academic adjustments, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- meet and abide by the college's academic, conduct and technical standards.

Students are also responsible for contacting the Accessibility and Counseling Center if reasonable academic adjustments are not implemented effectively or promptly.

The College of Central Florida has the responsibility:

- to provide information to students with disabilities in accessible formats upon request;
- to evaluate students on their abilities and not their disabilities;
- to provide or arrange reasonable academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services for students with disabilities in courses, programs, activities and facilities
- to maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication.

Confidentiality

As directed in state and federal laws and, in strict compliance with the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act, all disability information is confidentially maintained. FERPA is a federal law that protects the

privacy of students' educational records. Florida Statute 1002.225 mirrors the federal law regarding student privacy rights for our state institutions of higher education. Students have specific, protected rights regarding the release of such records. Disclosure of a student's disability is the personal preference of the student. A student may elect to share information regarding his/her disability. If so, faculty and staff must remember to maintain confidentiality. All confidential information should only be discussed with the student in private. Further, this information should only be discussed with other college faculty and staff for educational purposes on a need-to-know basis. At no time should the class be informed that a student has a disability.

Registration Process

Students at the College of Central Florida can follow a four-step process to apply for accommodations. Please note that students must finish CF's admissions process prior to completing the steps outlined below.

1. **Apply:** Fill out the [Application for Accessibility Services form](#) to begin the registration process.
2. **Submit Documentation:** Review the [Disability Documentation Guidelines](#) and the [Documentation Verification Form](#) for information on acceptable documentation. Documentation can be dropped off/emailed to the Accessibility and Counseling Center (ACC) located in the Bryant Student Union, Building 5, Room 204 at the Ocala Campus, 3001 S.W. College Road, Ocala, FL 34474.
3. **Attend Intake Meeting:** Once the CF Accessibility Services team reviews your documentation, you will be contacted for next steps, either to request additional documentation or to schedule an intake meeting to develop a plan to meet your academic needs.
4. **Check Patriots Mail:** Following your intake meeting, you will receive an email via your official CF student Patriots Mail account with your Faculty Accommodation Notice, which will also be sent to your instructors. The FAN is a document that explains the accommodations you will be receiving in the classroom (both online and face-to-face) and for testing. Please check for accuracy and verify all your instructors have received a copy of your FAN.

Disability Documentation Guidelines

Students must provide documentation of disability to ensure the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Review the options below for information on acceptable documentation.

Option 1 – IEP/504 Plan: Provide all pages of your most recent IEP/504 plan from school, including any supporting documentation if available.

Option 2 – Supporting Documentation: Provide a letter or medical records from a licensed professional containing the following information:

- ❖ **A diagnostic statement identifying the condition (diagnostic code), date of the current evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis:** DSM-V or ICD Diagnosis (test and code), given

based on a formal assessment of a disabling condition provided by a licensed professional (e.g., medical professional, psychiatrist, licensed psychologist or licensed social worker).

- ❖ **A description of the current functional impact of the disability:** Include a history of the disability, the expected progression or stability of the disability over time, and how the disability may impact a student's academic performance.
- ❖ **Treatments, medications, assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use:** Include estimated effectiveness in improving the impact of the disability.
- ❖ **The credentials of the diagnosing professional(s):** Certification, licensure, and/or the professional training of the treatment provider.

Option 3 – ACC Documentation Verification Form provided by ACC staff during the application process or accessed online at (<https://www.cf.edu/student-life/student-services/accessibility-services/apply-for-accommodations/>). This form can be given to a licensed professional (e.g., medical professional, psychiatrist, licensed psychologist, licensed social worker) to complete.

Qualified Professionals

Testing entities should rely on documentation provided by qualified professionals who have conducted an individualized assessment of the candidate and determined the necessity of requested testing accommodations. These professionals should be appropriately licensed or credentialed and possess expertise in the relevant disability. Candidates who submit documentation, such as reports or evaluations, prepared by qualified professionals are not obligated to provide additional documentation to testing entities. In such cases, testing entities should generally accept the provided documentation and grant the recommended testing accommodations without further inquiry.

Reports from qualified professionals who have evaluated the candidate take precedence over reports from testing entity reviewers who have never conducted the requisite assessment of the candidate for diagnosis and treatment. This is especially important for individuals with learning disabilities because face-to-face interaction is a critical component of an accurate evaluation, diagnosis and determination of appropriate testing accommodations.

A qualified professional's decision not to provide results from a specific test or evaluation instrument does not preclude approval of a request for testing accommodations where the documentation provided by the candidate, in its entirety, demonstrates that the candidate has a disability and needs a requested testing accommodation. For example, if a candidate submits documentation from a qualified professional that demonstrates a consistent history of a reading disorder diagnosis and that recommends the candidate receive double time on standardized exams based on a personal evaluation of the candidate, a testing entity will provide the candidate with double time. This is true even if the qualified professional does not include every test or subtest score preferred by the testing entity in the psycho-educational or neuropsychological report.

Scheduling Exams

Students have several options for scheduling exams with the ACC. Students are required to make arrangements three work days before the exam date. Failure to follow this rule may result in denial of a test being scheduled:

To schedule an exam the student can:

- ❖ Schedule an exam by using the online option on the Testing and Assessment Webpage, under Accessibility Students. (<https://onetesting.net/campus/ocala-disability-testing>)
- ❖ Complete the Test Form Sign Up in person at the ACC
- ❖ Send an email to disability@cf.edu with the test date, time, course number/section and instructor's name
- ❖ Contact the Accommodation Specialist at 352-854-2322, ext. 1395, and ask to be added to the testing schedule

The Accommodation Specialist will send the Instruction form to the instructor and make arrangements for proctoring the exam.

All tests must be taken on the same day and at the same time as the course unless approved in advance by both the instructor and Accessibility Services. Accessibility Services will not accept a change without a written note, voicemail or email from the instructor approving a change in the time or date.

Students must arrive within 20 minutes of the test start time, or the test will be returned to the instructor. If the student misses the test for any reason, it will be the instructor's decision as to whether or not the student may make it up. Refer to your course syllabus for specific policies.

If students arrive late, miss a scheduled test appointment, or fail to make advance arrangements three times in a given semester, their Accessibility Services testing accommodations may be stopped for the remainder of the semester.

No food or other drinks, purses, bags, jewelry, hats or cell phones will be allowed in the testing room unless it is specifically stated in the student's FAN as allowable. No books, notebooks or calculators will be allowed unless authorized in writing by the instructor on the testing form. These items will be placed in a locker outside the testing room.

Important: Accessibility Services will not tolerate cheating or academic dishonesty in any form. If anyone is suspected of cheating on a test, that test will immediately be taken away from the student and returned to the student's instructor or the test administrator. That and any other type of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the instructor. Your instructor will determine a course of action and the consequences. The CF Student Handbook contains the Code

of Student Conduct and information about the Academic Integrity Policy. These rules and regulations apply to all students, regardless of disability status. Accessibility Services reserves the right to deny service to students who fail to follow Accessibility Services Procedures.

Reasonable Accommodations

What are some examples of academic accommodations/adjustments for the classroom? Colleges and universities are required by Section 504 and Title II to provide students with disabilities with appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the school's program.

Some examples of academic accommodations are:

- extra time to take a test
- alternative testing formats
- large print
- adaptive seating
- beverages allowed in class
- course substitutions
- closed captioning

Examples of auxiliary aids include, but are not limited to

- Copy of notes
- American Sign Language interpreters
- audio recording of lectures
- zoom digital magnifier
- specialized computer equipment

CF is not required to supply students with attendants, individually prescribed devices such as hearing aids and wheelchairs, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

The College of Central Florida provides technical assistance on testing accommodations for individuals with disabilities who take standardized exams and other high-stakes tests.

What kinds of tests are covered?

Exams administered relating to applications, certifications or credentialing for postsecondary education, professional or trade purposes are covered by the ADA and testing accommodations, pursuant to the ADA, must be provided. Examples of covered exams include:

- High school equivalency exams (such as the GED);
- College entrance exams (such as the PERT);
- Exams for admission to professional schools (such as the LSAT or MCAT);
- Admissions exams for graduate schools (such as the GRE or GMAT)
- Licensing exams for trade purposes (such as cosmetology) or professional purposes (such as bar exams or medical licensing exams, including clinical assessments).
- Teacher-made tests

What are testing accommodations?

Testing accommodations are changes to the regular testing environment and auxiliary aids and services that allow individuals with disabilities to demonstrate their true aptitude or achievement level on standardized exams or other high-stakes tests.

Examples of the wide range of testing accommodations that may be required include:

- Braille or large-print exam booklets
- Screen reading technology
- Scribes to transfer answers to Scantron bubble sheets or record dictated notes and essays
- Extended time
- Wheelchair-accessible testing stations
- Distraction-free rooms
- Physical prompts (such as for individuals with hearing impairments)
- Permission to bring and take medications during the exam (for example, for individuals with diabetes who must monitor their blood sugar and administer insulin)

Course Substitution

If the student with a disability believes they cannot participate in or complete a particular course or program requirement, they may request a course substitution. To receive a course substitution, the student must complete the Substitute Requirement Request along with a copy of all disability documentation. Refer to the [Disability Documentation Guidelines](#) for specific requirements.

Due Process

Persons denied substitution/modification of one or more requirements may appeal the decision to the Dean of Student Services. The appeal shall be presented to the Accessibility Services Advisory Committee. The committee will forward their recommendations to the college president, whose decision is final.

Service Animals

Service Animals Policy

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, service animals are permitted in CF facilities. A service animal is a dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Examples of the functions of services animals include but are not limited to: guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing, providing minimal rescue or protection work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. Support animals (therapy, emotional support animals or companion animals) are not service animals and are not covered under the legal protections of the ADA. To work on campus, a service animal must be specifically trained to perform a service function related to the disability. Furthermore, the animal may wear a harness, cape, identification, tag or other gear that identifies its working status. This is not required but recommended so that others know it is a working animal. Service animals whose behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others may be excluded regardless of training or certification. The animal must be under the control of the handler at all times.

Students and campus personnel should not prevent a service animal from accompanying its owner, except where specifically prohibited. Students and campus personnel should not attempt to pet, feed or distract a service animal, as they are working animals providing a service to the person with a disability.

Description of Disabilities

The number of students with disabilities is gradually increasing on campus due to many factors. Better diagnostic methods have led to a better understanding of students who have experienced difficulty in the classroom. The following provides basic information on the disability and the typical accommodations:

Learning Disabilities: a documented disability that may affect reading, processing information, remembering, calculating, and spatial abilities. Accommodations for students who have specific learning disabilities may include:

- Copy of notes
- Extended time, alternative testing arrangements
- Computer with speech output, spell check and grammar check

Mobility Impairments: may make walking, sitting, bending, carrying, or using fingers, hands or arms difficult or impossible. Mobility impairment results from any causes including amputation, polio, club foot, scoliosis, spinal cord injury, and cerebral palsy. Typical accommodations for students with mobility impairments may include:

- Copy of notes, lab assistant
- Accessible locations for classrooms, lab and field trips
- Adjustable tables and/or seating
- Computer equipped with a special input device (i.e., speech input, alternative keyboard)

Health Impairments affect daily living and involve the major body systems and or other body parts. Typical accommodations for students who have health impairments may include:

- Copy of notes
- Extended exam time
- Flexibility of attendance requirements

Mental Illness includes mental health and psychiatric disorders that affect daily living. Examples of accommodations for students with these conditions may include:

- Copy of notes
- Extended time for exams
- Separate, distraction-reduced testing environment

Hearing Impairments may make it difficult or impossible to hear or understand lectures, access multimedia materials and participate in discussions. Examples of accommodations for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have an auditory processing disorder may include:

- Interpreter, FM system, copy of notes
- Open or closed-captioned films
- Written directions for assignments and lab instructions
- Preferential seating and elimination of unnecessary background noise

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental condition characterized by challenges in social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviors. It is called a "spectrum" disorder because it affects individuals differently and to varying degrees, ranging from mild to severe. Common accommodations for students with ASD include:

- Copy of notes
- Extension of Assignment Deadlines
- Extended time for exams
- Separate, distraction-reduced testing environment
- Audio Recording of Lectures
- Preferred Seating

Being a Good Self-Advocate

Self-advocacy is not about making demands; self-advocacy is about taking care of yourself so that you can achieve your goals. As a student with a disability, you will be more successful when you learn to take responsibility for your education. Being a good self-advocate means:

- Notifying the appropriate person(s) at the school that you have a disability

- Knowing your strengths and weaknesses and being able to verbalize them to the appropriate person(s)
- Using what you know about your strengths and weaknesses to ask for help in specific areas
- Asking for help at the beginning of a class, not after you are failing
- Letting the instructor know what assistance you will need in the class. Do not expect the instructor to figure it out for you
- Bringing important information (i.e., address, phone, e-mail, documentation changes, etc.) to school when you sign up for services each semester. Know what information you will need to have. It is important to provide this information early to receive help right away.
- Planning for the demands of college. Get your financial aid, work, activities, schedule and study time in place. Then, when you start school, you can concentrate on these new demands.
- Promptly completing and returning letters and other accommodation forms.

Common Myths about People with Disabilities

Myth: *Accommodations mean lowering standards and giving students an unfair advantage.*

Fact: Accommodations are not to fundamentally alter the core requirements of a course. The design of an accommodation is to remove disability-related barriers and thus enable students to meet existing standards.

Myth: *Students with disabilities lack the skills to succeed in college.*

Fact: In order to qualify for accommodations, students with disabilities must meet the same academic and technical requirements as their peers. During the course of their academic careers, they will demonstrate strengths and weaknesses just like other students.

Myth: *Students with disabilities always need extra help.*

Fact: Many people with disabilities are independent and capable of giving help to others. If you would like to assist someone with a disability, ask if they need assistance before you act.

Myth: *Wheelchair use is confining; all students who use wheelchairs are "wheelchair bound."*

Fact: Wheelchairs, just like bicycles and cars, are assistive devices that enable people to get around. Not all students in wheelchairs are "wheelchair-bound".

Myth: *If you cannot see a disability, it does not exist or the student is faking.*

Fact: There are many "hidden disabilities" such as learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD or psychological disabilities. Hidden disabilities are as valid and pose as many challenges as more visible disabilities.

Myth: *Students with learning disabilities have below-average intelligence.*

Fact: By definition, individuals with learning disabilities have average or above intelligence as measured by an individual IQ test and have a significant discrepancy between their ability and achievement.

Myth: *Given the proper instruction, students can grow out of their learning disabilities.*

Fact: Individuals with learning disabilities can and do acquire improved skills that often enable them to compensate for their learning disability. However, learning disabilities are permanent and cannot be "cured."

Myth: *All people with ADD are hyperactive and have learning disabilities.*

Fact: Only small percentages of people with ADD are hyperactive and/or have learning disabilities. ADD, ADHD, and LD are separate disabilities, exhibit differently, and affect people in different ways.

Myth: *People with psychiatric disabilities can only work at low-level jobs. They are not suited to be in the college setting and may never hold important or responsible positions.*

Fact: People with psychiatric disabilities are individuals. As such, their career potentials depend on their particular talents, abilities, experience and motivation, as well as their current state of physical and mental health. Visit the National Alliance on Mental Illness online at <https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI> for more information about mental health conditions.

Myth: *Blind students are proficient in Braille and use a guide dog.*

Fact: Only a small percentage of blind people are fluent in Braille and only a small percentage use a guide dog. Ever-advancing technologies enable people who are blind to choose among many types of assistive technologies to participate in life activities such as reading and navigating.

Myth: *All legally blind people have no functional vision.*

Fact: A legally blind person may have some functional vision or "low vision." People with low vision can often see with the use of assistive technologies if the light is not too bright or there is not too much glare.

Myth: *All students who are deaf or hard of hearing can read lips.*

Fact: Lip-reading skills vary among people who use them and are never entirely reliable.

Myth: *Deaf students cannot speak.*

Fact: As our speech production depends on our ability to hear the speech of others and monitor our own, the speech of some deaf people is not clear enough to understand. For this reason, some deaf people prefer not to speak. However, the speech capabilities and preferences of deaf persons vary from individual to individual.

Myth: *All people with speech disorders are deaf or hard of hearing.*

Fact: Many speech disorders result from causes other than not being able to hear one's own speech and the speech of others.

Myth: *People with speech disorders need help completing their words/sentences.*

Fact: No, it is best to wait patiently for people with speech disorders to express their own thoughts.

Myth: *People can fully recover from TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury).*

Fact: Recovery from even mild TBI may occur very slowly or remain incomplete. Any TBI can result in permanent and measurable deficits in processing speed, attention, memory and behavior.

Myth: *An IQ score in the average range is an accurate measure of recovery from TBI.*

Fact: The IQ score is a composite of many different scores. Therefore, an IQ score in the average range can represent superior performance on some tasks and severely impaired performance on others.

Myth: *All people with health-related disabilities are limited in what they can do and learn.*

Fact: Some people with health-related disabilities have no restrictions and may need only some accommodations and assistive technologies to have equal access. Others may require more intensive accommodations and services.

Myth: *Success for people with severe health-related disabilities cannot occur without fundamental modifications to the academic environment.*

Fact: Although accommodations do require adjustments to the academic environment, they will never require that you fundamentally alter your course core requirements.

Myth: *Accessibility Services is responsible for providing all services to students with disabilities.*

Fact: Students with disabilities are just like their peers. Assurance of access is a shared institutional responsibility.