

## **I. OFFICE OF TESTING AND ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES**

### **A. Policy Statement**

The mission of the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services (TAS) is to assist East Central University (ECU) students with disabilities by offering services to promote and ensure that no student with a disability is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under educational programs and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 504), and applicable state law. Student input is vital to this mission.

DS will work in collaboration with the student to determine what accommodations are needed through individualized discussion. While DS primarily serves the student population, the office will also serve as a resource for faculty members and departments charged with the responsibility of providing academic access to students with disabilities. The philosophy of DS is to promote independence and inclusion while pursuing innovation in services for students with disabilities at ECU.

DS is the designated campus office that verifies whether or not a student has a documented disability that significantly impacts the student's ability to access educational programs. DS will determine the appropriateness of a requested accommodation on an individualized, case by case basis according to their disability documentation. Students with disabilities are encouraged to notify and collaborate with DS to identify, establish the need for, and obtain accommodations.

DS is committed to providing access for all students with disabilities to educational programs and activities in accordance with the ADA, Section 504, and applicable state law. The following policies and procedures have been developed to facilitate this access

### **B. Function of Staff Members**

The following is a brief summary of the functions of staff members in DS. In addition to the listed duties, DS staff also routinely performs a variety of other activities to provide services to students with disabilities and the ECU community as required by law and University policy.

#### **Coordinator:**

The Coordinator of the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services coordinates the overall administrative operations of DS including, but not limited to, managing TAS staff and promoting campus-wide efforts to provide access.

During an intake meeting, the student's expressed needs are reviewed with the Coordinator. The submitted documentation of a disability will be evaluated, eligibility for services determined, and any requests for reasonable accommodations will be discussed. The appropriateness of an accommodation is determined by professional

documentation on a case by case basis and involves the student, DS Coordinator, and, if necessary, representatives from other University departments.

**Accommodation Specialist:**

With input from faculty and students, the Accommodation Specialist will coordinate and supervise the administration of adaptive course testing services. Students are responsible for informing the Accommodation Specialist of course materials they need in an alternate format in a timely manner. Students will also work with the Accommodation Specialist to receive note taking and use of assistive technology in order to receive reasonable accommodations for coursework.

**Student Workers:**

DS employs student workers to support the office in providing necessary services.

**II. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

**A. Prior to Admission**

If an applicant with a disability requires accommodations to facilitate the admission process, the applicant should make his/her needs known to the Office of Admissions and Records prior to their visit.

Admission to the University is based upon requirements established by the Office of Admissions and Records in accordance to University policy. Admission decisions are made without regard to disabilities. All prospective students are expected to present academic credentials that meet or exceed the minimum requirements for admissions. Information about the University's admission requirements is available from the office of Admissions and Records, Administration, 1100 East 14<sup>th</sup>, Ada, OK 74820, 580.559.5000.

**B. After Admission**

It is the responsibility of the student to self-identify as an individual with a disability. Furthermore, a student or prospective student is not obligated to self-identify, unless he/she is requesting accommodations from the University.

A student with a disability may request accommodations by contacting DS to schedule an intake appointment. Students are requested to send their current documentation of disability to the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services, in advance of their intake appointment. The documentation will be evaluated according to established DS guidelines. These guidelines will be furnished by DS upon request.

Timely requests are crucial to the process of facilitating accommodations. Retroactive accommodations will not be provided. A student who is requesting accommodations that require significant lead time such as books in audiotape, e-text, or Braille format, should make those needs known as far in advance as possible.

### **C. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information**

Disability documentation is considered confidential information and does not become part of a student's permanent record. Disability information is housed in the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services unless the student submits the documentation to another campus department. Copies of disability documentation are not provided to anyone. Students should obtain a copy of their disability documentation from the original source and retain a copy for their personal records.

### **D. Evaluating Requests for Reasonable Accommodations**

In evaluating requests for accommodation, DS shall consider the following criteria, as they apply to each request.

1. Whether the disability documentation meets established guidelines.
2. Whether the disability documentation supports the request for a specific accommodation.
3. Whether the accommodation is reasonable and effective as mandated by the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
4. Whether the accommodation is of a personal nature (the University is not required to grant accommodations of a personal nature.)
5. Whether the student will be assured of participation in the particular program without the accommodation.
6. What alternative accommodations are available to provide the student with the same or similar content and/or level of instruction for the particular course.
7. Whether the accommodation will fundamentally alter the particular course, degree requirements, or other academic program as determined by the appropriate faculty member, department chair, Dean and University officials.\*
8. Whether a requested accommodation constitutes an undue burden to the University.

\*Faculty, department chairs, Deans and other University officials determine what constitutes adequate curriculum requirements, what courses are necessary to the degree requirements, and whether the nature and objectives of individual courses have been met.

### **E. Accommodation Process**

Students seeking accommodations have a responsibility to contact DS to schedule an initial intake appointment. During this initial appointment, the student and the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services Coordinator will review disability related documentation (which should be submitted in advance), and discuss the student's expressed needs and requests for accommodations. Students will be given the opportunity to have input regarding the type and extent of any accommodations provided.

After the intake process and a Request for Services form is completed by the student, the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services Coordinator will make a determination regarding appropriate accommodations. If the request meets the criteria set forth in Section II. D, the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services Coordinator will complete and sign an ADA Accommodation Notification of Faculty and Staff form. It is the student's responsibility to take the completed form to the appropriate instructor for review and signature. After all signatures are complete the student will leave the instructor's copy and return the top copy to the DS office to be placed in their file. The student is encouraged to keep their copy in their personal records.

Prior to or at the beginning of each semester, the student should make an appointment with the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services Coordinator to complete a Request for Services form. Current accommodation needs will be discussed in order to complete the Faculty Notification process as discussed above. The student is responsible for obtaining and distributing the ADA Accommodation Notification of Faculty and Staff forms in a timely manner. Untimely requests for and/or distribution of these forms may result in a delay, substitution or denial of an accommodation.

### **F. Requests for Modification of Academic Requirements**

A request for modification of academic requirements is an interactive process involving the student, Office of Testing and Accessibility Services Coordinator, faculty, staff and administration to outline accommodations and define alterations, if any, to academic programs of the University. In providing accommodations, neither the University nor the teaching faculty is required to *fundamentally* alter its courses, curriculum, degree requirements or program objectives.

Modifications to academic courses and/or requirements are approved only where it is demonstrated that the accommodations will not alter the program objectives or affect academic integrity. Such requests by the student must be submitted in writing to the faculty member or academic departments. DS will discuss the matter with the student and appropriate University personnel (e.g. Dean, department chair, or faculty), who will issue a decision to the student.

### **G. Requests for Non-Academic Accommodations**

Students or other individuals with disabilities seeking to obtain accommodations unrelated to academic access (and therefore outside the responsibility of DS) from programs departments or other University affiliated organizations, may request accommodations for an upcoming event, activity, or other University sanctioned function. These students or individuals with disabilities may or may not be registered with DS. Upon request, DS will serve as a resource for determining whether if and how the accommodation should be provided. Documentation of the individual's disability may be required to support the request for accommodation.

In the case of non-academic accommodations, DS will not assume the costs. In these cases, it is the financial responsibility of the sponsoring program, department or other University affiliated organization.

Requests for non-academic accommodations must be made to the responsible office, department or other university affiliated organization in a timely manner in order to provide the University sufficient time to evaluate the request and implement accommodations. Untimely requests may result in a delay, substitution, or denial of an accommodation.

### **III. ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

#### **A. Exam Accommodations**

The provision of accommodations for exams is an interactive process involving the student, the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services Coordinator and Accommodation Specialist, and faculty. Faculty determine who will provide the agreed upon accommodations—either the faculty member or the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services. If exam accommodations are to be provided through DS, the student should adhere to the following procedures:

1. Return the completed and signed Accommodation Notification for Faculty and Staff form for the courses in which testing has been determined to be a reasonable accommodation to DS.
2. Obtain an Exam Assistance Request (EAR) Form from DS.
3. Submit the EAR form to faculty for their completion.
4. Notify DS ten (10) business days in advance or as soon as they are informed of the exam date. In the case of late requests, DS cannot guarantee implementation of the accommodation.

If exam accommodations are to be provided through DS, the faculty should adhere to the following procedures:

1. Complete EAR form and return it to DS before the scheduled exam.
2. Deliver class exam to DS office in a timely manner.
3. Indicate to DS whether they will pick up completed exam or DS should return the exam by interoffice mail.

Exams should be administered at the regular exam time. With advance notice to the Accommodation Specialist and the approval from the faculty member, the day, time, and location of the exam may be changed. No early or late exams will be allowed without prior approval from the faculty member. Faculty approval will be needed to administer exams if a student arrives more than 15 minutes later than the originally scheduled time.

If a student misses an exam scheduled through DS, he/she needs to immediately contact the faculty member and the DS Accommodation Specialist. If an exam is missed, it will be returned to the faculty member.

#### **B. Note Taking Accommodations**

If note taking accommodations are to be provided through DS, the student should adhere to the following procedures:

1. Return the completed and signed Accommodation Notification for Faculty and Staff form for the courses in which note taking has been determined to be a reasonable accommodation to DS.
2. Note takers are identified from the class. Once a note taker has been secured the student will provide them with NCR paper from DS.
3. The student will collect class notes from volunteer note takers and return to DS as soon after class as possible. Notes should be stapled together by class, labeled, dated, with the student's name and placed in the appropriate tray in the DS office. If a student does not drop their notes off on a regular basis, DS cannot guarantee a timely return of notes in the requested format.
4. The student should come to DS at least once a week to pick up notes. The Standard expectation for note taking services is that if an individual does not pick up notes for two (2) consecutive weeks, the service will be discontinued.

Students will work to identify note takers from the class. Students should use a tape recorder as a back-up until a note taker can be located. In cases where students are unable to immediately find a note taker, faculty will be asked to help locate a student in class. DS will do its best to assist in finding a note taker, but there may be instances in which one cannot be secured.

Students should notify DS when there is a problem with note taking services or in the event that services are no longer needed.

### **C. Accommodations for Alternative Format (Audiotape, E-Text, Braille, Etc)**

Students with disabilities, like all University students, are expected to purchase their own textbooks and course materials. Students with disabilities, however, will not be required to pay for the cost of converting books and written materials into alternative format. It is the student's responsibility to initiate requests for alternate format prior to the beginning of each semester. To the extent possible, DS recommends eight (8) weeks advance notice to assure that the needed materials are converted.

When written materials (tests, handouts, etc.) from class require conversion to an alternate format, it is the instructor's responsibility to provide DS with the material as far in advance as possible to ensure materials can be converted in the time needed. In cases where materials are provided at the last minute, DS cannot guarantee conversion at the time requested.

Students need to complete the following steps before the process of converting materials into alternate format can begin:

1. Upon completion of class registration each semester, submit a class schedule along with a list of books required for each class to the Accommodation Specialist. At this time, alternate format options, procedures, and reasonable expectation for receiving materials will be discussed. A signed agreement is generated at this meeting as to what is requested by the student and the procedures for providing the materials in alternate format.
2. Students are required to provide copies of classroom materials.
3. Students are encouraged to contact faculty early to obtain a class syllabus or to create a reading list if the syllabus is not immediately available. Syllabi and dated reading lists may be submitted by e-mail.
4. In the case of extenuating circumstances which prevent a student from following the aforementioned procedures, students should contact the DS Accommodation Specialist to discuss other arrangements.

#### **Important Information Regarding Alternate Format**

Students are encouraged to obtain an individual membership with the Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) or Bookshare audio book service. As an individual member, students may borrow available audio books directly through this national service which has over 93,000 titles in a broad variety of subjects. Students should speak with the Accommodation Specialist to obtain information on establishing an individual membership.

Since requests are filled on a first come, first served basis, late requests may result in a delay or substitution of the requested alternate format. **Office of Testing and Accessibility Services reserves the right to deliver optional types of alternate format to students as necessary to provide access. In such cases, DS will ensure that the format is accessible to the student. Students will be notified and involved in the process of deciding the best types of optional services.**

It is generally recommended that students make arrangements to pick up materials regularly. If alternate format is being provided in installments, DS will make every effort to notify the student that it is available for pickup.

Students should notify the Accommodation Specialist immediately if there are any changes in the status of a request or if there are any problems with the alternate format materials. **The Accommodation Specialist should be notified immediately if some or all the readings for a course are no longer needed or if the course is dropped.** In the event a student makes a formal request for texts in an alternate format and doesn't pick up the materials requested by mid-term of the semester the request was made, future requests cannot be guaranteed.

RFB&D audio books and loaned equipment should be returned to DS at the end of the semester. DS will attempt to contact the student when audio books and loaned equipment are not returned. If a student is not cooperative in returning loaned equipment or other loaned items a hold may be placed on their enrollment through the Bursar's Office.

### **Copyright Policy**

Copyrighted materials reproduced in an accessible format by DS for a individual with a disability may not be copied, shared, distributed, or sold, except in accordance with the provisions of the copyright laws.

## **IV. PERSONAL AIDS AND EQUIPMENT**

Students with disabilities are permitted to use personal aids and specialized equipment, as long as the aid or equipment does not interfere with other students or the faculty member. Faculty members may work with students on alternative aids and equipment that might assist students in accessing academic materials. Problems related to the use of aids or equipment in the classroom should be referred to DS for resolution.

Students are responsible for providing their own personal devices or services, including, but not limited to the following: wheelchairs or wheelchair repair, personal transportation; computers and software for use at home; individually prescribed devices; prescription eyeglasses; hearing aids; readers for personal use; alternate format materials unrelated to academic courses; or services of a personal nature including assistance in eating, using the toilet, bathing, or dressing. As appropriate, DS will make referrals to



agencies or organizations that may be available to assist students in fulfilling needs outside of the jurisdiction of DS.

### **A. Personal Care Attendants**

Attendants are authorized to accompany students with disabilities and to perform both personal and academic tasks for them, such as taking notes, scribing, and turning pages. These attendants should not, however, interfere with other students or the teaching faculty member. Problems that relate to personal attendant services should be referred to the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services.

### **B. Service Animals**

East Central University is committed to compliance with state and federal laws regarding individuals with disabilities. With respect to a request for a service animal, ECU Office of Testing and Accessibility Services (Room 159 Administration) will determine, on a case by case basis, and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, whether such animal is a reasonable accommodation on campus.

For students seeking reasonable accommodations that may include a service animal as defined by the ADA, an accommodation review process will be undertaken, and will require sufficient information and documentation that meets specific guidelines ([http://www.ecok.edu/disability\\_serv/doc\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.ecok.edu/disability_serv/doc_guidelines.htm)). Additional conversations between the ECU Office of Testing and Accessibility Services and the requesting student may be necessary.

**Service Animal Definition:** By law, a service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals. In some cases, ECU may permit miniature horses on campus on a case by case basis, consistent with applicable law. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Federal law does not require the individual to provide documentation that an animal has been trained as a service animal. The University may, however, ask if the animal is required because of a disability, as well as what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

**Exceptions:** The University may exclude a service animal from campus if its behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or when its presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity. Furthermore, the University may ask an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from campus if the animal is out of control and the individual does not take effective action to control it; or if the animal is not housebroken.

**Responsibilities of Individuals with Service Animals:** ECU is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal. Individuals with disabilities are responsible for the control of their service animals at all times and must comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including vaccination, licensure, animal health and leash laws. A service animal shall be restrained with a harness, leash, or other tether, unless an individual's disability precludes the use of a restraint or if the restraint would interfere

with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If a service animal is not tethered, it must be otherwise under the individual's control, whether by voice control, signals, or other effective means.

Individuals are responsible for ensuring the immediate clean-up and proper disposal of all animal waste. Although the University may not charge an individual with a disability a service animal surcharge, it may impose charges for damages caused by a service animal in the same manner the University imposes charges for damages in other cases.

## **V. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Student Rights**

Students with disabilities cannot be denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under educational programs and activities in accordance with the ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and any applicable state laws. Students have a right to an individualized assessment of documentation; timely delivery of services consistent with the notice provided by the student; confidentiality; and prompt equitable investigation and resolution of complaints.

### **B. Student Responsibilities**

Students with disabilities have a responsibility to self-identify; self-advocate for individual needs; provide early notice of an accommodation request; adhere to the policy and procedures for accessing accommodations; and fully participate in the accommodation process.

## **VI. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

### **A. Resolution of Grievances through the University Judicial System**

Claims of discrimination on the basis of disability, such as claims of differential treatment or harassment, are directed to and resolved by University grievance process (See ECU Student Handbook).

### **B. Resolution of Grievances through Formal Process**

Formal grievances related to the failure to provide reasonable accommodations may be initiated through the ADA/504 Compliance Officer who will attempt to achieve an informal resolution of the grievance. If an informal resolution cannot be achieved, the ADA/504 Compliance Officer will appoint an ad hoc Disability Grievance Committee to hear the case. Then the ADA/504 Compliance Officer will issue a formal ruling. If the

grievance is against the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services, the ADA/504 Compliance Officer will issue a formal ruling unless it reverses the recommendation of the ad hoc Disability Grievance Committee. In this case, the grievance and recommendation of the ad hoc Disability Grievance Committee will be reviewed by the \_\_\_\_\_ who will issue a formal ruling.

All written grievances should contain (1) a description of the nature of the complaint; (2) previous efforts at resolution; and (3) proposed remedy.

## **VII. ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

Disability Services provides the following adaptive technology to ensure reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities:

- Dragon Naturally Speaking for Window (Speech recognition software)
- Jaws for Windows (Screen reading software)
- Scanners with Optical Character Recognition
- ZoomText for Windows and DOS (Screen magnification software)
- MegaDots Braille Translation Software
- VersaPoint Braille Embosser
- TextAloud (Text to voice software)
- Merlin Enhanced Vision CCTV
- MP3 Players (For books in audio format)
- 22" Widescreen Monitor
- Tactile Image Enhancer
- Perkins Brailler and Braille Paper
- Magnifiers
- ClaroRead software for Learning Disabilities
- Braille Label Maker