

Student with Disabilities

Student Handbook

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Coordinator for Students with Disabilities

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Dear Student:

OC Tech is deeply committed to ensuring that all students who have a disability are provided an educational environment that is both sensitive to and accommodative of their needs.

Documentation must include the practitioner's qualifications, the students' disability and recommendations for academic accommodations. The Coordinator of Services for the students with Disabilities must speak with (in person) the student that is seeking accommodations. A Disability Intake Form Appendix A needs to be filled out.

This handbook provides valuable information about the laws that govern post-secondary institutions and OCtech's procedures for qualifying and receiving appropriate services. **Accommodations are good for one term only. Students must complete a new Accommodation Agreement for each term.** The form is attached to this handbook as Appendix B.

The Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities office is located in **Building S (Student Services area.)** If you have any questions, please contact the coordinator at the following: **(803) 535-1225 or (803) 535-1224/dibblet@octech.edu.**

Sincerely,

The Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities

ADMISSION TO THE COLLEGE

Applicants who have a qualifying disability will not be denied admission solely on the basis of their disability. To ensure that such students are not negatively treated in the admissions process, neither faculty nor staff members are permitted to make pre-admission inquiry. While it is not necessary, nor recommended, that students disclose their disability in the application process, a student who has a disability that may prevent him or her from meeting an academic or technical admission program requirement should consult with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities.

DISABILITY LAWS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) COMPARED TO SECTION 504 & ADA

Many students with disabilities and their parents have learned the basics of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, as students and their families prepare for the transition from secondary school to postsecondary options, they often find they are less familiar with the protections provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

In seeking to understand the differences between ADA, Section 504 and IDEA, students and parents need to take into consideration that the education of all children, from K-12, is mandatory; therefore, school districts, and States need to ensure that the guidelines set by the federal government under IDEA, are met. In other words, the States and the school districts need to ensure that they provide accommodations, which will help all students, without discrimination, finish high school.

However, post-secondary education is discretionary, which means that colleges and universities need to comply with ADA, and/or Section 504. In other words, post-secondary institutions need to ensure that they provide "equal access" and "equal opportunity" to education. Unlike IDEA, Section 504 and ADA do not ensure that a child with a disability will receive an individualized educational program that is designed to meet the child's unique needs and provides the child with educational benefit, nor prepare the child "for employment and independent living."

The best example, which illustrates the difference between these two concepts, is how conduct is treated at the high school level, and at the post-secondary education level. If a high school student's conduct is inappropriate, and if the misconduct is a result of the student's disability, then the student cannot be expelled under IDEA, and it is the high school's responsibility to modify the student's IEP, and include behavioral objectives that would address the misconduct. On the other hand, if a student breaks the code of conduct of a post-secondary education institution, even if the misconduct is a result of the student's disability, s/he may be expelled because under ADA and Section 504 the student needs to "meet the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the institution's program." The chart below further illustrates the differences between IDEA, Section 504, and ADA.

ILLUSTRATED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IDEA, SECTION 504, AND ADA

	IDEA	ADA, Section 504
Laws	Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Educational Institutions	K-12	Post Secondary and K-12
Confidentiality	Parents may participate in the process and receive progress updates.	Confidentiality policies prohibit staff from discussing students' progress with third parties.
Services Available	Supplemental Aides and Services	Reasonable Accommodations and Academic Adjustments
Institutional Differences	Education is a right for all individuals.	Education becomes a privilege.
Providing Services & Accommodations	The school must follow up with the student and their teachers to insure the student is receiving services.	The student must provide reasonable advance notice and must take responsibility to follow through with receiving accommodations.
Focus of Responsibility	Schools must identify, assess and offer services for students with disabilities	Students must identify themselves to the appropriate source to receive services. They must also provide the coordinator with current, valid documentation to receive accommodations.
Delivery Method	Individualized Education Plan	Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Special accommodations are granted.

ASSESSING THE NEED FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS: DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

OC Tech will provide “reasonable” program, policy, and testing accommodations for students with qualifying disabilities. **It is the responsibility of students to provide appropriate and substantiating documentation to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities.** Students should be aware of the following:

The documentation must:

- verify the existence of a disability as defined under Section 504 and under the ADA
- establish a clear connection between the accommodations being requested and the effects of the disability.

All requested accommodations might not be granted, especially if the accommodation meets one or all of the following criteria:

- Providing the accommodation would fundamentally alter the program, course, or activity;
- The accommodation being requested is not supported by the documentation;
- Providing the accommodation would pose a direct threat to the student or to others;
- Providing the accommodation would constitute an undue administrative or financial burden pursuant to criteria established under the ADA and/or Section 504.

Eligibility for reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be determined on an individual basis by Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, based on the documentation. **If accommodations are not clearly identified in a diagnostic report or letter, the coordinator will seek clarification and, if necessary, more information.**

New Students:

New Students at OCtech must do the following to receive services:

1. Make an appointment to see The Coordinator of Services for Students with a Disability. This can be done by calling the office at (803) 535-1225 or (803) 535-1224/dibblet@octech.edu or by coming by the office in person (Student Services Area Building S). Office hours are 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Thursday.
2. Fill out the Disability Intake Form (Appendix A)
3. Gather /Submit documents that establish the existence of a disability
4. Fill out an Accommodation Form for each term (Appendix B)
5. It is the student's responsibility to identify themselves to each of their instructors as a student with a disability.

Returning Students:

Returning Students at OCtech who have already registered with the Coordinator of Services for Students with a Disability should come by to fill out an Accommodation form for each term once they have completed a schedule with their faculty advisor. **Accommodation forms must be turned in each semester to ensure services for each class.** All returning students are responsible for introducing themselves to each of their instructors as a student with a disability.

Who is served by the Office of Students with a Disability?

Any student enrolled at OCtech who has a documented disability and that disability has an impact upon the educational environment is eligible for services. Students must provide this documentation at their own expense and effort. The Coordinator of Services for Students with a Disability reserves the right to deny services or accommodations until such a time as the appropriate documentation is provided. The actual services that will be provided are determined based on the nature and severity of the disability and the course requirements. Consultation may involve the student, Coordinator for Students with a Disability and the academic faculty.

Note: If you were served in Special Education while in the public school system we will need your **MOST CURRENT PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION**. This is the evaluation that determined you were eligible for services in Special Education. **THIS IS NOT AN IEP**. Your IEP is not helpful when determining eligibility for services in post-secondary education. Your IEP will tell us WHAT you received in public school; it will not tell us

why. Your evaluation will assist us in providing the most effective accommodations and services.

Documentation requirements vary among college institutions. If you plan to transfer, be sure to contact the office at the receiving institution and get information on their documentation requirements and process for applying for services. The Coordinator of Services for Students with a Disability will be happy to assist you with this process.

DOCUMENTATION FOR A DISABILITY

Who needs documentation for a disability?

Any Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College student who wants to receive accommodations must provide clear evidence of a disability.

What is documentation?

Documentation is information about the disability provided by a doctor or professional trained in the specific area of disability. Documentation can be a letter or report from an appropriate professional that states the disability and functional limitations.

Documentation Format:

- **All documents must be TYPED (not handwritten) on a full-size letterhead and signed.**
- **A Diagnosis written on a prescription pad or half size letterhead are NOT accepted.**
- **Students are encouraged to bring their documentation with them when they apply for services instead of having it mailed to the college.**

When must this documentation be provided?

Documentation must be provided to The Coordinator of Services for Students with a Disability before the student can receive services.

Where is the documentation kept?

Documentation is kept in a separate confidential file and is never part of the student's academic record. The student's academic record and their disability/accommodation record are NEVER combined in compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The type of documentation required for each type of disability [i.e., hearing, vision, physical, psychiatric, traumatic brain injury, learning (LD), attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and health] is described below. Each subsection by type of disability will address the following:

- Qualifications of the Evaluator
 - Substantiation of the Disability
 - Recommendations for Accommodations
-

Disabilities of Hearing

a. Qualifications of the Evaluator: A licensed audiologist, certified by the American Speech Language Hearing Association, or a licensed medical doctor with certification in otology, or otolaryngology, will be viewed as qualified to substantiate disabilities of hearing. The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment and state/province in which the individual practices, should be clearly stated. All reports/letters should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

b. Substantiation of the Disability: The requisite document will be an audiogram, which has been completed within the last year. The audiogram should include verification (for both ears) of hearing sensitivity by pure-tone frequency, speech thresholds, and discrimination. A report or letter describing the nature of the disability and the need for accommodations should accompany the audiogram.

c. Recommendations for Accommodations: The report or letter should include specific recommendations for accommodations and an explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended.

Disabilities of Vision

a. Qualifications of the Evaluator: A licensed Doctor of Optometry or a licensed medical doctor with certification in Ophthalmology will be viewed as qualified to substantiate disabilities of vision. The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment and state/province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated. All reports/letters should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

b. Substantiation of the Disability: The required document will be a report or letter of assessment from the Optometrist or Ophthalmologist describing visual acuity and field of vision, the nature of the disability and the need for accommodations.

c. Recommendations for Accommodations: The report or letter should include specific recommendations for accommodations and an explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended.

Physical Disabilities

a. Qualifications of the Evaluator: A licensed physical therapist or a licensed medical doctor will be viewed as qualified to substantiate physical disabilities. The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment and state/province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated. All reports/letters should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

b. Substantiation of the Disability: The required document will be a report or letter of assessment from the physical therapist or physician describing the nature of the disability and the need for accommodations.

c. Recommendations for Accommodations: The report or letter should include specific recommendations for accommodations and an explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended.

Psychiatric Disabilities

a. Qualifications of the Evaluator: A licensed psychologist, licensed social work professional, or licensed psychiatrist will be viewed as qualified to substantiate psychiatric disabilities. The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment and state/province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated. All reports/letters should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

b. Substantiation of the Disability: The required document will be a report or letter of assessment from the psychologist, social work professional, or psychiatrist describing the nature of the disability and the need for accommodations.

c. Recommendations for Accommodations: The report or letter should include specific recommendations for accommodations and an explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended.

Learning Disabilities

a. Qualifications of the Evaluator: Evaluators should have experience or training in the assessment of learning problems in adolescents and adults: clinical or educational psychologists, school psychologists, neuropsychologists, learning disabilities specialists, and some medical doctors will be viewed as qualified to substantiate learning disabilities. The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment and state/province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

b. Substantiation of the Disability: The required document will be a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation report. An IEP or 504 plan is NOT sufficient as documentation, but may be attached to the comprehensive diagnostic report. Students should also be aware that he or she may not necessarily be entitled to or receive the same accommodations at the post-secondary level that he or she received in high school. A different legal and regulatory framework governs postsecondary institutions. Being "classified" at your high school is no guarantee of service eligibility at a college or university.

The diagnosis must show clear and specific evidence of a learning disability. Such euphemisms as “learning style” and “learning differences” are not acceptable and in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability.

The complete diagnostic report should include a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, and information processing, a specific diagnosis, test scores, and a well-written clinical diagnostic summary based on a comprehensive evaluation process is a necessary component of the report. The evaluator with background information, observations of the client during testing situation, and the current context must integrate the elements of the assessment battery. Psychotherapeutic interests should not dominate the summary; rather the students' educational and learning needs should be the focus.

The clinical summary should:

- 1) demonstrate that evaluator has ruled out alternative explanations.
- 2) indicate how the patterns reflect the presence of a learning disability.
- 3) indicate a substantial limitation to learning, and
- 4) indicate why specific accommodations are needed.

Current documentation is critical. In most cases “current” means testing that has been conducted in the past three years. Flexibility in accepting documentation is important, especially in settings with significant numbers of non-traditional students. In some instances, documentation may be outdated or inadequate in scope and content. It may not address students' current level of functioning or the changes in students' current level of functioning. In such cases, it may be necessary that the student update the evaluation report. Accommodations and services are based upon the current impact of the disability upon a student's academic performance.

c. Recommendations for Accommodations: The recommendations should indicate why specific accommodations are needed and how the effects of the specific disability are accommodated. The specific test results or clinical observations should support the recommendations.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

a. Qualifications of the Evaluator: Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of ADHD must have training in differential diagnosis and the full range of psychiatric disorders. Clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, trained physician, or neurologists will be viewed as qualified to substantiate ADHD. The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment and state/province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated. All reports/letters should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

b. Substantiation of the Disability: Documentation of ADHD must be current (within 3 years) and must be comprehensive. An IEP or 504 plan is NOT sufficient as documentation. A complete diagnostic report should include evidence of early impairment and evidence of current impairment with a statement of presenting problem and diagnostic interview. The diagnostic report must rule out alternative diagnoses/explanations, must report relevant testing (such as neuropsychological testing), identify DSM-IV criteria, include a specific diagnosis and include an interpretive summary. Each accommodation recommended by the evaluator should be substantiated with a rationale. The preferred documentation of ADHD will be a complete neuropsychological report with psychometric data; this report may be required for certain types of accommodations requested.

c. Recommendations for Accommodations: The recommendations should indicate why specific accommodations are needed and how the effects of the specific disability are accommodated. Specific test results or clinical observations described in the letter should support the recommendations.

Disabilities of Health

a. Qualifications of the Evaluator: A medical practitioner will be viewed as qualified to substantiate a health disability. The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment and state/province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated. All reports/letters should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

b. Substantiation of the Disability: The required document will be a report or letter of assessment from the physician describing the nature of the disability and the current need for accommodations.

c. Recommendations for Accommodations: The recommendations should indicate why specific accommodations are needed and how the effects of the specific disability are accommodated. The specific test results or clinical observations should support the recommendations.

ACCESSIBLE CLASSROOM/ROOM CHANGE

All college services and academic programs must be accessible to students with disabilities. In certain cases, a course may be scheduled in a building, which is not fully accessible. When a student with a documented disability is in such a course, the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities will work with the appropriate college personnel to relocate the course to an acceptable and accessible space. In this way, each program remains accessible, even when a building is not fully accessible.

REDUCED COURSE LOAD WITH FULL-TIME STATUS

Students may have documentation that warrants a reduced course load while maintaining full-time status. In such cases, the coordinator will authorize such reduction by review of the documentation and discussion with the student. Students are encouraged to discuss full-time course load requirements with an academic advisor for their respective program. The coordinator will communicate the appropriate information to the Office of the Registrar and/or the Financial Aid Office as required.

Federal law requires that Pell Grant funds be prorated based on the number of credits taken, and that the student financial aid budget also be reduced accordingly. A financial aid counselor can determine how student aid under the Federal Stafford Loan Program will be affected by a reduction. To have a previous loan deferred, the student must take at least six credits. Students whose disabilities warrant the adjustment of carrying less than a full-time load per semester, however, can be determined eligible for student financial aid status. In such a case, these procedures must be followed:

1. Student must provide appropriate documentation regarding his/her disability to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities.
2. If a student is registered at the beginning of a semester for less than a full-time credit load as an accommodation for a disability, this must be verified by the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities for this verification **NO LATER THAN** the last day of the College's ADD/DROP period.
3. If a student registers at the beginning of a semester for full-time course load but drops to a reduced course load by properly withdrawing from a course, he/she must discuss this situation with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities **NO LATER THAN** the last day of the drop period for classes.

4. Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities will notify the Registrar **each semester** regarding students with disabilities carrying fewer than a full-time course-load who are eligible for Financial Aid consideration under these procedures. The procedures for **Eligibility for Financial Aid** must be followed **each semester**.

Website Accessibility

Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College is committed to providing information on the web in an accessible format and efforts are being made to assure equal accessibility to people with disabilities.

Students having difficulty accessing any information presented on our website, should contact the Coordinator for Services for Students with Disabilities.

DELIVERY OF ACCOMMODATIONAL SERVICES

After the initial meeting with the student and upon receipt of a student's substantiating documentation, the coordinator will have a determination meeting with the appropriate Instructors and the Academic Program Coordinators. All parties involved will sign the accommodation form and will receive a copy of the agreement form. This form lists accommodations requested by the student for that academic term. It is the responsibility of the student to introduce themselves to the academic faculty member before classes begin. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to make sure that accommodations are met in a timely fashion. The coordinator will meet with faculty at least one week before classes start or at least by the end of ADD/DROP period of each semester. If the student comes in after classes have started the coordinator still needs to meet with the faculty member and address accommodations within two weeks. Once all parties have signed the accommodation form the student and faculty member will receive a copy of the agreement form. The Coordinator of Services for Students with a Disability can arrange an introductory meeting in the event one is needed by student and/or faculty member. **Accommodations will not be provided retroactively.**

In the event that a problem arises with the delivery of accommodational services, the student should contact the coordinator immediately. **The coordinator is responsible for initiating actions to remedy the problem.**

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

If a student disagrees with the coordinator's decision as to the appropriateness of an accommodation or the denial of a request for an accommodation, the student has the right to address the concerns with the Vice President of Student Services. If the student is unsatisfied with the decision of the Vice President of Student Services, he or she may request a grievance hearing as outlined in the college catalog and the student handbook, under grievance policy.

APPEALS PROCEDURES

If the decision is reached to deny the requested accommodation, the student will have (5) business days to appeal the decision in writing to the Student Disability Appeals Committee. At the meeting, the student will be granted the right to present evidence to support his/her contention as to why the decision rendered at the determination meeting should be overturned and why the requested accommodation should be granted. After the appeals meeting, the Committee will have (3) business days to render a final decision. The Student Disability Appeals Committee's decision may be appealed to the College President within (3) business days of the Committee's decision. The decision of the President is final.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND RETENTION OF RECORDS

All documentation submitted to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities will be considered confidential and will be shared with others within the college on a need-to-know basis. In other words, faculty and staff members will not have access to information regarding a student's disability, only the accommodation(s) that are appropriate and necessary to meet the student's needs. Confidential information is kept in a separate file and is not considered a part of a student's educational record. Under no circumstances will information be released to a third party. **Documentation records are retained for a period of (1) year after the student has been graduated.** Students who have not been in attendance for a period of one year will have to re-submit documentation.

Documentation records will be retained by the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities for a period of (3) consecutive semester of enrollment activity, or after the semester of graduation, the student accommodation records, psychological evaluations and other related documents will be destroyed.