



# Student Disability Resource Guide

## *Handbook for Students with Disabilities*

The University of Montevallo strives to assure accessibility of all programs, services, and activities for students, employees, and guests. This Resource Guide is made available to help students understand their respective rights and responsibilities under federal laws that prohibit discrimination based on disability. Please contact Disability Support Services for further information.

For DSS announcements, student reminders and other disability and access-related news, visit our social media [@montevalldss](#)

Disability Support Services reserves the right to exercise its judgment in establishing, administering, and interpreting all DSS procedures. DSS also reserves the right to modify or suspend any and all procedures, in whole or in part, at any time, and without notice. The most current version is always available on the DSS website and in the DSS office. This handbook may be obtained in alternate formats upon request.

May 2026

**Table of Contents**

**Disability Support Services .....4**

**University Policy .....4**

**Voluntary Self-Disclosure .....4**

**Postsecondary Disability Law .....5**

    The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504, Subpart E)..... 5

    The Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA)..... 5

    The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) ..... 5

    Fair Housing Act of 1988 (FHA) ..... 6

**Reasonable Accommodations .....6**

**University Admission .....6**

**Documentation.....6**

    Applicable Timelines regarding Documentation..... 8

    Disability-Specific Documentation Guidelines ..... 8

        Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder..... 8

        Head Injury and Post-Concussion Syndrome ..... 9

        Learning Disability/Dyslexia ..... 9

        Medical, Mobility and/or Sensory Disabilities ..... 9

        Mental Health Disabilities and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder ..... 10

**Transition from High School to College .....10**

**Student Responsibilities.....10**

**Faculty Responsibilities .....11**

**Accommodations and Services .....11**

    General Information about academic or classroom accommodations ..... 11

    Alternative Format Materials..... 12

    Closed Captioning Procedure..... 12

    Employment Disability Issues ..... 13

    Emotional Support Animals ..... 13

        Priority Deadlines..... 13

        Basic ESA Guidelines and Expectations:..... 14

    Housing and Dietary/Meal Plan Requests or Modifications ..... 17

        Priority Deadlines for Disability-related Housing Requests Fall term: May 1..... 17

        Review Criteria ..... 18

Interpreting (Sign Language) and Real-time Captioning.....	19
Attendance/Punctuality while using an Interpreter or Captionist .....	19
Student Satisfaction with Interpreting /Captioning.....	20
Parking (Accessible/Disability) .....	20
Notetaking Procedures .....	20
Personal Care Attendant Procedures.....	21
• Student’s Responsibilities .....	21
Personal Care Attendant’s Responsibilities .....	22
University’s Responsibilities.....	22
Priority Registration .....	22
Reasonable Modification of Attendance or Tardy Policy .....	23
Request for Notification to First Responders .....	24
Testing Accommodations.....	24
Online Assessments: .....	24
In-person Assessments: .....	25
Service Animals .....	26
Definition .....	26
Expectation regarding Service Animals.....	27
Emergency Response & Service Dogs .....	28
Conflicting Disability Needs .....	28
Service Dogs in Training .....	28
Technology Use in the Classroom.....	29
Temporary Disability Accommodations.....	29
Third Party Testing Documentation (testing accommodations related to Graduate School, Certification, or Licensure exams) .....	30
<b>Appendix/Procedures .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Procedure for Academic Accommodation Requests .....	30
Disability-Related Modification or Substitution of Academic Requirements Request Procedure .....	31
Pregnant and Parents Students (Title IX Accommodations).....	31
The University is dedicated to supporting the academic success of pregnant and parenting students. This includes prohibiting discrimination against pregnant and parenting students in all academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs or activities... <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>	
Student Disability Grievance Procedure .....	32

## **Disability Support Services**

The Disability Support Services (DSS) Office serves as the central contact point for students with disabilities (SWD). The office strives to ensure equal access to all services, classes, and events for students with disabilities and provides guidance as needed to meet the needs of employees or guests with disabilities. DSS is considered the primary office on campus with specialized knowledge and experience in disability issues and serves as the central location for maintaining confidential disability documentation.

DSS is located in Main Hall, rear lower level, and is fully accessible from the public entrances at the rear of the building. There is convenient accessible parking off Vine Street. (Note: Main Hall is also a residence hall, and therefore has multiple front and side doors which are locked, accessible only by Main Hall residents.) DSS is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## **University Policy**

The University Board of Trustees' approved policy (Disability Compliance Policy 01:130) states:

"In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the University is committed to making its services, facilities, programs, and accommodations accessible to employees, students, visitors, qualified applicants for employment and qualified applicants for enrollment, including people with disabilities.

The Director of Disability Support Services is responsible for making recommendations and assisting in the provision of services and reasonable accommodations for the needs of students with disabilities and for monitoring their effectiveness. The Director of Physical Plant is responsible for identifying physical barriers and for maintaining accessible buildings and grounds. The Special Assistant to the President for University Events coordinates accommodation requests related to University events and programs. The Director of Human Resources and Risk Management is responsible for identifying and implementing employee-related accommodation needs and for monitoring their effectiveness. The Director of Disability Support Services coordinates University compliance as related to ADA/Section 504 matters."  
Last Revised 05/26

## **Voluntary Self-Disclosure**

Students legally have the right to choose when or if they want to self-disclose a disability and/or request accommodation. There may be times when a student may choose not to self-disclose when they first enroll, or, they may decide to delay requesting accommodations. This is the student's decision and will be respected. However, accommodations are not retroactive, and requests must be made with timely notice. The University is not responsible for accommodating undisclosed disabilities.

Students wishing to request accommodation should contact DSS. Contact information for DSS is available on every course syllabus, on the website, in orientation materials, the Bulletin (catalog), and the Fledgling (student handbook). DSS also maintains a presence on multiple social media platforms.

## **Postsecondary Disability Law**

Individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal access to postsecondary programs. There are 4 primary laws that protect persons with disabilities in postsecondary education: the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and the Fair Housing Act. These laws define an individual with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment; has a history of impairment; or is believed to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, speaking, seeing, hearing, breathing, walking, performing manual tasks, or performing self-care tasks.

### **The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504, Subpart E)**

Title V of The Rehabilitation Act is generally regarded as the first major civil rights legislation on the national level for people with disabilities. Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act is a program access statute. It prohibits discrimination based on disability in any program or activity offered by an entity or institution receiving federal funds. Section 504 states (as amended):

“No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States...shall, solely on the basis of disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal financial assistance.”

### **The Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA)**

The ADA is a federal civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The law has four main sections: employment, government, public accommodations, and telecommunications. The ADA provides additional protection for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA is designed to remove barriers, which prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities that are available to persons without disabilities.

### **The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA)**

The ADAAA was passed by Congress with the stated intent of restoring some of the original purpose of the ADA, specifically overturning a series of Supreme Court decisions which had put significant limits on the 1990 law. The ADAAA broadened the definition of the disability by:

- Expanding the definition of “major life activities” to include all major bodily systems such as digestion, respiratory, endocrine system, etc., and activities such as thinking and working
- Redefining who is “regarded as” having a disability
- Modifying the definition of “substantially limits”
- Specifying that “disability” includes impairments that are episodic or in remission, if they substantially limit a major life activity when active
- Prohibiting consideration of ameliorative effects of mitigating measures in most situations

The ADAAA also clarified that individuals who meet only the “regarded as” prong of the disability definition are not entitled to accommodation. The passage of the new legislation required some universities to re-examine their disability policies.

## **Fair Housing Act of 1988 (FHA)**

The Fair Housing Act applies to higher education, requiring colleges to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in campus housing, including dormitories. Institutions must avoid discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin. Relevant, current documentation regarding the functional impact of the disability can be required by the institution.

## **Reasonable Accommodations**

Federal disability laws call for provision of reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that academic requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, based on disability, against a qualified applicant or student. Accommodations will be provided based on the specific request and disability documentation provided to the university. Accommodations will not be provided retroactively. A request may be deemed “unreasonable” if it:

- Creates a direct threat to the health or safety of others
- Causes a substantial change in an essential element or a substantial alteration in the manner in which the university provides a program or service
- Causes undue financial or administrative burden

## **University Admission**

The Office of Admissions processes applications for all undergraduate and graduate programs. The standards for admission are outlined in the Bulletin on the University’s website.

Qualified persons with disabilities must meet the University’s admissions standards. Admission decision appeals are considered on a case-by-case basis, but the University does not have an obligation to lower academic standards. Qualified applicants with disabilities will not be denied admission solely on the basis of their disability. Students do not need to disclose their disability in the initial application process, however if a student requires any accommodations during the admission process, such as during a visit or tour, they should advise Admissions or DSS of that need in advance.

Once admitted, SWD requiring accommodation should contact DSS to request services. Disclosure of a disability to Admissions staff does not obligate DSS to provide services or accommodations beyond those that might be requested during the application process (such as requesting a sign language interpreter in advance of a campus visit). Students should always contact DSS to make housing or academic accommodation requests.

## **Documentation**

As allowed by federal law, the University has developed reasonable documentation guidelines as described below. They are also posted online: [www.montevallo.edu/documentation-guidelines](http://www.montevallo.edu/documentation-guidelines). These guidelines follow best practices published by the Association on Higher Education and Disability. The guidelines are designed to provide flexibility to the DSS office in reviewing every request on a case-by-case basis, while also ensuring consistent and effective services.

It is hoped that the guidelines will assist current and prospective students, and their medical or treatment professionals, in gathering information that will be useful in determining appropriate accommodations.

- Students should keep all original documents, including school records and medical reports, providing the DSS office with copies (with exceptions when medical professionals send documentation directly to the University). **High school IEPs, 504 Plans or Health Plans** may or may not be sufficient as stand-alone documents, but submission of such documents is encouraged.
- A clear diagnosis is requested; however, a diagnosis alone may not be sufficient to document the need for accommodations/auxiliary aids. Documentation should address the limitation(s) created by the diagnosis or describe how the disability may impact the student in a postsecondary environment.
- Documentation should come from an **appropriate professional**. Documentation should not be written/completed by a relative. Documentation should be dated, signed, and on letterhead. Any handwritten documentation must be legible, but typed information is preferred.
- **The type and recency** of documentation is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and there may be times, based on the nature of the disability, that very limited documentation might be needed. Information is also gathered through the DSS Application and the intake interview with the student. **DSS reserves the right to request updated documentation as appropriate, depending on the age of the student (currently and at the time of the evaluation or diagnosis), and/or the type of accommodations being requested.**
- Approval for accommodations at the University does not assure the sufficiency of the documentation for transfer to another postsecondary institution, or for the standards of various professional/graduate school testing agencies. If the documentation submitted is deemed insufficient, additional documentation may be requested. The University has no responsibility for the cost of obtaining such documentation. If documentation is acceptable, but the University wishes to obtain another opinion, the University reserves the right to request such at its expense.
- The University reserves the right to contact any professional completing this form to confirm source or (with a release) to ask for clarification of details or the documentation may be deemed insufficient. Final determination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations rests with the University.
- Documentation will be held in a confidential manner, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act. (FERPA) allows for limited sharing of information with select University officials on an “academic need-to-know” basis. Examples of such circumstances could include handling a student disability-related grievance or possible harm to self or others. Court orders, subpoenas or complaints filed outside the University may also result in files being provided to Administrators or University counsel. In any such cases, all University personnel involved will continue to maintain the student’s privacy to the extent possible. A written release will be required for records to be forwarded to any other institution or agency.
- The nature of the student’s disability is not disclosed within the faculty accommodation letters, unless a student requests to disclose specific information, such as emergency medical

information. Generally, faculty members only have access to information regarding the accommodation(s) that is the minimum necessary to meet the student's needs.

- Parents or other family members do not have access to any disability information, nor to information regarding grades, attendance, use of accommodations, etc., without specific written release from the student. Students may complete a FERPA release on the University Registrar's webpage.

## **Applicable Timelines regarding Documentation**

When documentation is received in person or via email/US mail from a prospective student/parent without an online [DSS Application](#), DSS will attempt to acknowledge receipt and request student complete the application. Once an online application and documentation have both been submitted, they will be reviewed, and an email will be sent to the student regarding next steps. Currently enrolled students who complete a DSS application and submit sufficient documentation after the beginning of a semester will typically be able to make an intake appointment within five (5) business days.

Documentation received on prospective students, who then do not enroll at the University and/or do not complete a DSS application, will be kept no longer than one (1) year. DSS files on enrolled students are kept for a minimum five (5) years after last date of enrollment at the University (per state records retention requirements). Documentation submission is preferred via the DSS Student Portal or via email. If paper copies are mailed or brought to DSS, students should always keep originals.

## **Disability-Specific Documentation Guidelines**

### **Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder**

Diagnosis and a description of the need for accommodation, which may include relevant medical, social, or educational impact. History of the use of educational accommodations is not required but is often helpful.

- Description of the impact of this condition on major life activities such as learning, seeing, hearing, etc. This may be provided by thorough description of current impact (in the classroom, while taking tests, etc.). A generic statement such as "student exhibits 7 DSM criteria" are generally not sufficient. Results of checklists/ratings scales, and/or psycho-educational (aptitude, achievement, processing) testing can also be useful. Note that testing data may be required to approve some academic accommodations (such as extended time beyond 1 ½ time or provision of alternate format materials). Students are encouraged to contact DSS to determine if updated evaluation may be needed.
- Current treatment/medication, including side effects, when relevant.
- Recommendations for reasonable accommodations can be helpful but may not be required for every accommodation. Please provide rationale for any recommendations that may not relate directly to symptoms or testing described.

### **Head Injury and Post-Concussion Syndrome**

Description of the diagnosis and need for accommodation, which may include relevant medical, communication, social, or educational impact.

- Description of the impact on major life activities affected by this disorder such as learning, seeing, hearing, sleeping, walking, etc. Testing results addressing cognitive processing (such as working memory, reading rate, academic fluency, etc.) can be needed depending on the accommodations requested.
- Current treatment/medication, including side effects, when relevant.
- Recommendations for reasonable accommodations. If accommodations may be needed on a temporary basis only, please describe.

### **Learning Disability/Dyslexia**

Description of the diagnosis and need for accommodation, which may include relevant medical, social, or educational impact. History of the use of educational accommodations is not required but is often helpful.

- Description of the impact of this condition on major life activities such as learning, seeing, hearing, etc. This may be provided by thorough description of current impact (in the classroom, while taking tests, etc.). A generic statement such as “student has learning disabilities and needs appropriate accommodations” is generally insufficient. Students are encouraged to contact DSS to determine if updated evaluation information is needed. Note that testing data may be required to approve some academic accommodations (such as extended time beyond 1 ½ time or provision of alternate format materials such as e-text).
- Documentation typically involves tests in the area of intelligence/aptitude and academic achievement. DSS requests that reports contain applicable subtest scores, with standard scores and percentiles. Achievement testing may include assessment of reading comprehension, math and/or written language. Formal inventories or classroom/testing observations and a summary of the achievement testing addressing significant strengths or weakness may be helpful in providing a complete picture of the accommodation needs.
- Recommendations for reasonable accommodations. Please provide rationale for any recommendations that may not relate directly to the testing or educational history described.

### **Medical, Mobility and/or Sensory Disabilities**

Description of the diagnosis and need for accommodation, which may include relevant medical, communication, social, or educational impact.

- Description of the impact on major life activities affected by this disorder such as learning, seeing, hearing, sleeping, walking, etc.
- Current treatment/medication, including side effects, when relevant.
- Recommendations for reasonable accommodations. If accommodations may vary significantly based on episodic symptoms or be needed on a temporary basis, please describe.

## **Mental Health Disabilities and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Description of the diagnosis and need for accommodation, which may include relevant medical, social, communication, or educational impact.

- Description of the impact on major life activities such as learning, concentrating, sleeping, walking, etc.
- Current treatment/medication, including side effects, when relevant.
- Recommendations for reasonable accommodations. If accommodations may vary significantly based on episodic symptoms or be needed on a temporary basis, please describe.

## **Transition from High School to College**

The transition process from high school to college can be difficult for students and parents. The federal laws protecting SWDs' rights and responsibilities change from the K-12 setting to the postsecondary environment. At the high school level, students may have had a very minimal role in their educational services or no role at all, with parents and school administrators coordinating all services. When students enroll at the University, they are responsible for communicating with DSS if they wish to make requests or experience difficulties.

DSS is available to assist in this process but students remain responsible for making requests and communicating with faculty and DSS staff. DSS does not provide student accommodations based solely on requests from parents. All efforts are made to assist students and parents as they transition into these new roles.

## **Student Responsibilities**

The student is responsible for making accommodation requests. To obtain disability-related services and accommodations, the student should:

- Disclose the disability to DSS (complete an online application)
- Provide documentation as required for determination of access or accommodation (upload to DSS Portal, email to [DSS@montevallo.edu](mailto:DSS@montevallo.edu) or fax to 205-665-6255)
- Make requests each semester for specific accommodations or services in a timely manner

The student is responsible for requesting academic accommodations each semester. DSS then expects the student to follow-up with each faculty member regarding the accommodations to discuss course details related to tests, attendance, notetaking (as relevant) and/or to confirm which accommodations might be needed in any given course. Students should contact DSS for assistance if unable to connect with faculty or if they have trouble implementing their needed accommodations.

Accommodations regarding housing, meal plans, parking, etc., may need to be requested or renewed yearly depending on the disability and the specifics of the accommodation. (Additional details may be found regarding these services within this Resource Guide.)

DSS policies and procedures can be found on the University website and in written form, such as the Bulletin, the Fledgling, and the Disability Resource Guide. Faculty will also have written procedures and

expectations which will be outlined in their syllabi. Students are responsible for becoming familiar with these regulations. As the University will use the student's university email account as the official means of contact, students should check this regularly, even during breaks.

### **Faculty Responsibilities**

Faculty members are responsible for indicating their willingness to discuss (in person or via phone or email) accommodation needs in a timely fashion with any student who has provided an accommodation letter. A faculty member who feels an approved accommodation substantially alters an essential element of their course should immediately contact DSS for discussion, clarification and to determine if an alternate accommodation might be acceptable.

The procedure for requesting classroom accommodations is included at the end of this handbook, and additional resources for faculty can be found on the Faculty/Staff link of the [DSS webpage](#). Faculty are expected to include the following University ADA statement (as approved by the VPAA and Deans) on all class syllabi.

*ADA Statement:*

*The University of Montevallo provides equal opportunity to qualified students. If you have a disability (medical, physical, learning, psychological, etc.) and wish to request disability-related accommodations to complete course requirements, contact Disability Support Services (located in Main Hall, rear entrance; 205- 665-6250). Course requirements cannot be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided based on disability documentation and course objectives. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.*

### **Accommodations and Services**

#### **General Information about academic or classroom accommodations**

All academic accommodations are managed via the DSS portal software. Initial applications are submitted via the Portal, and after the intake meeting and approval for services, students will log into the DSS Student Portal **each semester** to request Faculty Notification Letters (FNL) be sent to faculty. Occasionally DSS will contact faculty in advance about specific needs, but for most accommodations, faculty will only know about a student's needs if the student logs in and requests that these letters be delivered.

Students are requested to follow-up directly with faculty after the initial DSS email. **It is the responsibility of each student to communicate with each faculty member once they receive their copy of the accommodation notice.** This contact may be initiated via a short email indicating that they are aware faculty have been notified and that they were instructed to then communicate about specifics of the accommodations, or the class requirements or policies. This email can be very simple, such as: "I see you received the DSS accommodation email and I was told to follow-up with you so we could discuss the accommodations I may need for your class."

This follow-up conversation may also occur via phone, zoom, or in person, and it may be used to ask questions of the faculty about what resources they may post on Canvas, what type of tests they give and discuss the possibility of having tests proctored in DSS, all depending on the nature of the course and the type of accommodations needed. The discussion allows both the student and the faculty member to gain more information that may help determine if all eligible accommodations are needed for that specific class.

Students and Faculty are encouraged to cc [DSS@montevallo.edu](mailto:DSS@montevallo.edu) on any email with their faculty discussing specific accommodation needs, especially if the student or the faculty member has questions about the need or implementation for an unusual or complicated accommodation or course situation.

### **Alternative Format Materials**

- Students who qualify for this service may request that print materials (e.g., textbooks, notes, tests) be converted to a format such as e-text, Braille, or audio. The University may obtain texts from a variety of sources, including Bookshare, Access Text Network (ATN), or publishers. If the text is unavailable through those sources, then the alternative format may be produced in-house or ordered through a contract vendor.
- It is the responsibility of the student to notify DSS of specific book requests as early as possible. DSS will attempt to obtain appropriate information about each requested text (title, author, publisher, copyright date, etc.) from the bookstore, but students should check their email regularly in case there are questions about specific books or formats.
- All requests will be processed as quickly as possible regardless of when they are received, however, DSS does request a minimum of **three (3) week notice** to provide alternative formats in a timely manner. Earlier notice is recommended. Late requests may result in delayed materials. If a book must be produced in-house, the student is responsible for providing DSS with a copy of the book. *Proof of purchase (a receipt) is required to provide alternate formats produced in-house or obtained from a publisher or contractor.*

### **Closed Captioning Procedure**

- The University relies on administrators, faculty, and staff to provide equal access to all programs and activities for individuals with disabilities. Effective access for individuals who are deaf or have hearing loss often includes the use of captioned media. The use of captioned media also provides benefits to individuals with learning, attention, or cognitive limitations on auditory processing.
- Students should have access to captioned media on Canvas and on the UM website, but if they do find media that is missing captions, they should notify their faculty, the sponsoring department or DSS.
- Questions can be addressed to Barbara Ann Lewis, DSS Coordinator/Technology Specialist ([blewis3@montevallo.edu](mailto:blewis3@montevallo.edu) or [dss@montevallo.edu](mailto:dss@montevallo.edu)). Additional information can be found online: <https://www.montevallo.edu/campus-life/student-services/disability-support-services/captioning-and-assistive-technology/>.

## Employment Disability Issues

Many employers, including the University of Montevallo, are covered under federal disability law. Covered employers may not discriminate based on disability and work-related accommodation requests must be considered. Reasonable accommodation occurs when a modification in job requirements or structure can be made without causing the employer undue hardship and when doing so will allow the employee to perform the essential functions of the job. Student employee accommodation requests or concerns should be directed to the Manager of Student Employment (Human Resources, 205-665-6071, Will Lyman House).

- Reasonable accommodations must be offered for every phase of employment (e.g. pre-employment testing, on-the-job accommodations for task performance, training, consideration for promotions).
- Accommodations are based on the needs of the individual and the requirements of the job.
- The University is not responsible for accommodating disabilities of which it is unaware.
- The University may ask applicants/employees if any reasonable accommodation is needed to perform the essential functions of the job if the disability is obvious or if a disability is disclosed.
- An accommodation, if implemented, is intended to allow the employee to be better able to perform the tasks of the job in question but does not guarantee success.
- Accommodations which are deemed legally unreasonable due to a substantial alteration of essential functions, financial/administrative burden, or threat to others may be denied.

## Emotional Support Animals

**Important Information regarding Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) in University Housing:** Please read before obtaining documentation or making an ESA Housing request under the Fair Housing Act. Any request to allow an ESA in campus buildings other than the student's personal residence hall would not fall under the Fair Housing Act and questions should be directed to the DSS office.

## Priority Deadlines

(Applies to all disability-related housing accommodation requests, including ESAs):

<b>Fall Request</b>	<b>May 1</b>
<b>Spring Request</b>	<b>November 1</b>
<b>Summer Request</b>	<b>March 1</b>

For consideration to have an ESA approved under the Fair Housing Act, students should submit the 3 items described on the [DSS website](#) by the *priority deadline*. The 3 items include a **DSS application** and the **Housing and Dietary Request Form** (both completed online by student), and an **ESA Verification Form** (to be completed by student's mental health treatment professional). Typically, **two weeks** is requested for a decision from the date all paperwork is submitted. *Note that while all requests will be reviewed, even if submitted after the deadline, but DSS reserves the right to postpone review of last-minute submissions (received within 3 weeks of the start of a term) until the end of the first week of class.*

This University approval process applies to on-campus University Housing only; DSS does not provide documentation or approval for an ESA for commercial or any non-university housing situation. ESA approval

within in a residence hall follows a consistent case-by-case approach. **Students are subject to the usual housing policies and consequences if they bring animals outside of this approval.**

**If an ESA is approved** by DSS, the student will be asked to complete an ESA Agreement, agreeing to all expectations regarding care and behavior of the animal. In total, after approval, the following items must be submitted to DSS before the animal can arrive on campus 1) Fully completed ESA Housing Agreement, 2) current statement of good health/appropriate vaccinations, 3) Photo of the animal, and 4) Roommate Agreement(s) when applicable. Sufficient time for DSS to review documents and send notifications to Housing, UMPD and other relevant UM personnel is required before animal is allowed to be in residence.

Documentation of the mental health diagnosis and the associated need for an ESA should come from the treating mental health provider, one who understands the specifics of the student's symptoms and can explain how the presence of the animal may help to alleviate symptomology. There are growing number of website services that offer to "certify" an ESA or to create "ESA letters" for a set price, often based answers to an online survey and/or phone call, rather than actual counseling relationship, or clinical or medical therapy. There is no formal, recognized certification of ESAs, and no recognized state or national "registry" of ESAs. ESA certificates, ID badges, vests, online registries, etc., are not necessary nor considered in the approval process of an ESA. **Please reconsider before spending money on the purchase of such letters**, as they will rarely provide the information necessary to support your request for accommodation and are typically not viewed by the University as a reliable source of information.

**Recent developments within Housing and Urban Development (HID) have indicated that complaints related to emotional support animals will no longer be investigated or enforced. Housing accommodation involving animals can be limited to trained service animals.** UM understands that animals can be of comfort for those with mental health diagnoses and DSS is open to requests to have emotional support animals, but we do require that our ESA verification form be completed by the student's licensed mental health treatment professional.

*It is a class C misdemeanor under Alabama state law to misrepresent an animal as an assistance or service animal or to create or provide to others a document that misrepresents or falsely states that an animal is such for use in housing. Subsequent offenses are classified as class B misdemeanors.* Approvals for an ESA are typically considered valid for up to two academic year and updates will be necessary (as mental health conditions and their symptoms are variable).

### **Basic ESA Guidelines and Expectations:**

- 1) ESA Verification Form (completed by the licensed mental health treatment professional) may be required to be **updated every 2 years**, as mental health disorders are, by definition, variable conditions. Letters may also be written assuming they address the questions in the ESA Verification Form. Treatment professional should be licensed in Alabama or in the student's home state and should have a treatment relationship with the student. Documentation provided by relatives will not be considered acceptable.
- 2) Letters purchased from online doctors/companies (many of whom also sell letters for airline travel, apartment landlords, vests, ID badges, leashes and other specialty ESA merchandise) who have not personally evaluated/treated a student are very likely to be considered unacceptable documentation. All requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- 3) A student may be found eligible for an ESA but the University has the right to deny a *specific* ESA as requested. The University has a responsibility to consider the impact on an overall living space, including roommates, hall mates, etc. Generally, **dogs must be at least 4-6 months of age** to live on campus, to be a bit more mature and to ensure they have all the necessary vaccinations. **But students are strongly encouraged to wait until dogs are at least 9 -12 months old to assure that the dog is reliably housebroken and will not be disruptive to other residents.** Very young puppies often do not adjust well to the crowds and noise of a college residence hall and the excitement and stress can result in a loss of potty skill or excessive barking, which can be cause for the dog to be removed.
- 4) Certain animals may be deemed inappropriate for Montevallo's community living environment, such as farm animals, animals that are non-domestic, exotic, venomous or poisonous, animals that require live food or heat lamps, or those that are clearly too large or inappropriate for a residence hall. Animals at risk of zoonotic diseases will not be permitted without specific medical clearance from a veterinarian. Approval for any specific animal will be granted on a case-by-case basis. A different animal may need to be chosen as the ESA.
- 5) **Generally, no approvals will be granted for multiple ESAs.** If the selected animal is bonded with another animal (or for whatever reason needs to live in pairs), then a different animal should be considered when the request is made.
- 6) **ESAs are approved for the student's immediate living space only.** They are not allowed in other students' rooms, Greek chapter rooms, or in other common areas of the residence hall. ESA approved for housing cannot be taken to class or other campus buildings. If a request is made that the animal be allowed in other areas of campus, then additional documentation and discussion will be necessary, as that type of accommodation falls under a different federal law.
- 7) **ESAs must be contained (*leashed, caged, or crated*) at all times if the student is not in the room.** This is an important consideration in choosing the ESA. If it is not used to being crated or contained it could create significant stress for the animal, possibly resulting in excessive barking or behavioral problems. ESAs must be carried or leashed while being taken to and from the resident's room. Note that the city of Montevallo does have a local leash law.
- 8) **ESAs may not be left in the care of other on-campus residents.** Animals should never be left unattended in a residence hall for extended periods (time varies based on type of animal), and may not be left alone overnight, on weekends or during any university closing. It is a violation of Housing policy for students to give their key to other students, including to feed or care for the animal. Students will be fully responsible for the cost of any intervention on the part of the University should an animal be found unattended or neglected. Animals may not be left alone in cars parked on campus.
- 9) **Emergency contact information** must be provided to DSS/Housing if the student owner of an ESA is hospitalized or has another unforeseen emergency and cannot care for the animal. **These must be individuals who agree to remove the ESA from campus for temporary care.** If the identified individuals decline or fail to remove the ESA, the University may relocate the ESA to a local boarding facility at the

student's expense. At least one contact person must be someone other than a parent or guardian, as they will likely be attending to student's immediate needs in a crisis.

- 10) Appropriate **vaccination/ health records** (which may vary depending on type of animal) and a **photo of the ESA** must be submitted to DSS before the animal can be brought to campus. **Annual updates regarding the ESA's health/vaccinations are required.** The University may ask that the animal be removed if it is deemed neglected or in need of medical care.
- 11) **Animals must be house-broken**, if applicable. Student is responsible for emptying litter boxes and/or cleaning up outside animal waste and depositing it (bagged) in outside garbage bins. Animal waste may not be left in or near University buildings or on sidewalks or grass lawns.
- 12) **Students bringing ESAs to campus are fully responsible for the animal's behavior, and for any damage done.** If the ESA is disruptive to the living environment for others (e.g., barking, growling or other loud noises, fleas, or significant odor from the animal, litter boxes or cages), or if there is damage done to University facilities, the ESA will need to be removed from the premises within 24 hours of notice being given. Students are responsible for property damage, flea/pest services required due to animal and/or any cleaning deemed necessary beyond typical end-of-year maintenance. **Students have full liability should the ESA bite, scratch or injure another student or staff member.**
- 13) The University maintains no responsibility for any animal approved to live in housing and will not provide care or food for any animal including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm. Emergency personnel will determine whether to remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal.
- 14) Housing and DSS must be notified if approved animal is no longer in residence on campus. Students may not replace or substitute a new animal (even if same breed) for the originally approved animal without a request to DSS, as each request is individually assessed (vet records would need to be obtained, etc.)
- 15) Students may be told to remove the ESA from University Housing for any of the following reasons (A warning may or may not be given based on the circumstances):
  - Disruptive or out-of-control (aggressive behavior, excessive barking, or otherwise disruptive behavior in the residence hall)
  - Not house-broken or causing damage to any university property
  - Determined to be very ill, neglected, in need of immediate medical care, or to have a substantial lack of cleanliness or odor
  - Determined to be a direct threat to health and safety of others

## Housing and Dietary/Meal Plan Requests or Modifications

- Students with long-term or permanent disability conditions may need accommodations related to their housing assignment or meal plan. **Any medically or disability-related exception to housing or meal plan policy should be considered an accommodation request and referred to DSS.** Examples could include wheelchair accessibility, first floor rooms, medically necessary private rooms and/or bathrooms, flashing fire alarms or door knock strobe lights for the deaf, or modifications to prepared foods or meal plans due to significant food allergies or medical conditions.
- Students should choose “yes” on the question regarding disability-related needs on the online University Housing application if that condition may impact the housing assignment or the meal plan options. Housing will then send the student’s name and contact information to DSS so that confidential inquiries can be made to the student about their needs. Housing and Residence Life will refer all disability-related calls or emails to DSS to answer questions and effectively offer the student assistance.
- Documentation should be from an appropriate treating professional and should describe the disability or medical condition. If not obvious, the documentation should describe the severity and/or impact of the disability. Documentation should provide a recommendation for the housing and/or meal plan accommodation, specifically if the request is medically necessary.
- Requests for accommodations related to housing and dietary needs may be reviewed by DSS, and when necessary, by appropriate staff from Health Services and/or Counseling Services.
- **Private rooms are extremely limited based on current occupancy rates.** All requests are reviewed on a **case-by-case basis and will be decided based on severity of medical necessity.** Students should be aware that **requests based on diagnoses of mild-moderate depression, mild-moderate anxiety, and/or autism have increased at least 4-fold over the past few years** and will require extensive details to be considered. **Requests based on ADHD and/or a need for a quiet study space** will generally not be approved, as DSS and Housing highly recommend studying in the library or other designated study spaces on campus. **Requests for private rooms due to online counseling or therapy sessions** are easily handled by reserving the available private spaces within the Counseling office.
- Student Housing Applications and professional documentation must detail severity of symptoms and describe why the student would not be able to live on campus without a private or single room (e.g. describe the medical necessity of that particular accommodation). Documentation is held within DSS and is not sent to or kept on file in Housing.
- Information regarding requests for approval of an **emotional support animal** or the **notice of a service dog to live in University Housing** are included in other sections of this Resource Guide.
- Note: All course/schedule related meal plan exemption requests should be referred to the Cashier’s Office ([cashier@montevallo.edu](mailto:cashier@montevallo.edu), 205-665-6065). All non-medical food preference request, including vegan and vegetarian preferences should be referred to the Director of Dining Services (205-665-8233) so that available options can be reviewed/discussed.

## Priority Deadlines for Disability-related Housing Requests

**Fall term: May 1**

**Spring Term: November 1**

**May/Summer Term:** March 1

**Note: Late requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis but cannot be guaranteed.**

### **Review Criteria**

All supporting documentation for housing and dietary accommodations should be sent to DSS **Below is a summary of the factors that staff members will consider when evaluating housing and meal plan requests. Knowing these criteria may provide guidance as to the information submitted.** Any student dissatisfied with a decision or action concerning a housing or dietary accommodation may appeal by contacting the Chief Student Affairs Officer.

#### Severity

- Is the impact of the condition life threatening if the request is not approved?
- Is there a negative health impact that may be significant if the request is not met?
- Is the request an integral component of a treatment plan for the condition in question?
- Is there a history of hospitalizations for the condition?
- What is the likely impact on academic performance if the request is not met?
- What is the likely impact on the student's level of comfort if the request is not met?
- How will the condition be handled in settings outside the residence hall, such as in dining hall, classrooms, or campus offices?
- If allergy-related, what are the student's specific triggers or allergens?

#### Timing

- Was the request made with initial housing request?
- Was the request made before the priority accommodation deadline?
- Was the request made as soon as possible after identifying the need? (Considering date of diagnosis, receipt of housing assignment, change in symptoms, etc.)

#### Feasibility and Availability

- Is space available that meets the student's needs?
- Can space or procedures be adapted to provide the requested configuration without creating a safety hazard (threat to others, electrical load, emergency egress, medical emergencies, etc.)?
- Are there other effective methods or housing configurations that would achieve similar benefits as the requested configuration?
- How does meeting this request impact housing commitments to other students?

## Interpreting (Sign Language) and Real-time Captioning

- Qualifying deaf or hard-of-hearing students can request interpreting or real-time captioning for classes and other University events. Students should contact DSS to request services for classes, small group work, meetings with faculty, field trips, etc. Interpreting/captioning (I/C) requests for non-academic university activities are coordinated through DSS but may require coordination with the sponsoring department or organization.
- Interpreters and captionists (I/C) can be hard to find with short notice. DSS requests advance notice to serve students more effectively and efficiently. **For new classes (registration or drop/add) advance notice is defined as at least 2 weeks before classes begin. For other requests (such as group work, project meetings, faculty meetings), 2 days' notice is requested whenever possible.**
- DSS understands that situations may not always allow for such notice, and staff will make every reasonable effort to locate an I/C for all requests, including those received after the requested notice. But the University cannot guarantee the provision of an interpreter or real-time captionist if requested with very short notice.

### Attendance/Punctuality while using an Interpreter or Captionist

- The University wishes to provide I/C in a manner that is effective and efficient, so we request notice for known absences. Students are asked to email or text the DSS office as early as possible if they will be late or miss a class. Students may also contact the I/C as well if they have contact information for the service provider.
- If an I/C does not arrive, the student should email [DSS@montevallo.edu](mailto:DSS@montevallo.edu) or text the staff person whose number will be provided. Efforts will be made to locate another service provider, but if there is no one available, DSS may attempt to record the remainder of the lecture so that it may be interpreted or transcribed later. Additional notes or a review of information with the faculty member when an interpreter becomes available can also be requested.
- No-Shows: Students are asked to notify DSS (email [DSS@montevallo.edu](mailto:DSS@montevallo.edu), text the staff person whose number will be provided or call 205-665-6250 via relay) to cancel their I/C if they will not attend class. In addition to notifying DSS, students may contact the interpreter/captionist directly about an absence, if they have that contact information. Exceptions will be made for emergencies (e.g., car trouble, accident, sudden onset of illness of student or immediate family). No contact in advance of an absence is classified as a No-Show.
- Late Notice is defined as notification that occurs less than 24 hours before the class or event that the student was to attend.
- Students with **two No-Shows or Late Notices in a course** will be sent a reminder email regarding notification requirements. Students **with three or more No-Shows or Late Notices in a course** may be required to meet with a staff member to review procedures. Interpreters and captionists are expected to report No-Shows and Late Notices to DSS staff. DSS understands that unexpected situations can occur, but interpreting and captioning are very expensive, hard to arrange services and the staff wants to be the best stewards of those valuable resources.
- If a student will be absent from one class but plans to attend a later one in the same day, notification to DSS is essential, as a No-Show to one class may affect services for the rest of that day. (For example, if car trouble affects the student's attendance at 8 am, but the student plans to be in a

10 am class, he or she should text/email DSS staff. No contact may result in DSS releasing the I/Cs or changing his/her assignment, meaning there could be a lack of services for second class.

- An I/C is expected to wait only 15 minutes from the start time of a 50 minute class/event before leaving (20 minutes for a longer class /event). After that time, I/Cs may leave, and the class will be counted as a No-Show. Captionists are provided for real-time access and are not required to provide transcripts of lectures or discussions that occur in the absence of the student.

### **Student Satisfaction with Interpreting /Captioning**

- Students should contact DSS if they believe that their services are ineffective. Staff will happily meet with the student to discuss the concerns and seek to find the best possible solution to provide effective communication in the classroom and in other campus services. DSS will address any student request or concern on a case-by-case basis to ensure students have access to communication in the classroom in a manner that is effective and comfortable.
- Students have a right to complete evaluations on all interpreters/captionists at the end of a semester. An evaluation form can be requested in the DSS office or via email.

### **Parking (Accessible/Disability)**

- All faculty, staff and students must register their vehicle (purchase an individual university hangtag/sticker) with the university if they plan to park on campus. (Tickets may be issued between 7:30 am and 6 pm.) Vehicles with the blue campus accessible hangtag are allowed to park in accessible spaces, and other legal parking spaces. It does not permit longer parking in 20 minutes zones, or parking in loading zones or other no-parking areas.
- Students should register online for their commuter or resident permit and then bring the sticker, along with a copy of the receipt for their accessible (disability) state license plate or placard, to DSS office. Resident or commuter sticker will be exchanged for the blue campus hangtag.
- The office will need a copy of the receipt/registration for the state placard/license plate with the student's name to confirm the individual's need for the campus blue tag.
- No additional or increased cost is incurred.
- Temporary disability parking, due to injury or illness, is also provided through DSS. Individuals should bring a letter from their medical professional indicating diagnosis/reason for the temporary permit and the expected duration of the need. Individuals requesting temporary permits for extended periods of time (e.g., 2-6 months) should obtain the state temporary permit as well.

### **Notetaking Procedures**

- Notetaking assistance can be a necessary academic accommodation to students whose documentation indicates that the disability impairs the students' ability to take effective notes during in-person lecture or labs or during synchronous online classes.
- Notetaking assistance is determined on a class-by-class basis taking into consideration the inherent features of each course and the method of instruction as it relates to the student's documented disability. The goal is to supplement gaps in the notes because of

missing information. An interactive process is used to decide appropriate note-taking accommodations.

- Notetaking accommodations should not be used as a substitute for a student's full participation in class. Some of the common types of notetaking support include permission to use notetaking software, audio recording, and smart pens. Students approved for this accommodation will be notified by DSS of the options available to them.

### **Personal Care Attendant Procedures**

- Due to the nature or severity of their disability, some students may need assistance in areas such as getting to/from classes, toileting, feeding, dressing, or help with social cues. The University welcomes requests to allow access for such personal care attendants (PCAs), but it is not responsible for the coordination or financial responsibility of personal care services.
- For the student who requires PCA services to have the same independent experience as all other college students, it may be in the student's best interest to hire a PCA who is not a family member or close friend. Although it is strongly discouraged, if a student requiring PCA services chooses to hire another enrolled student as their personal attendant, that employment relationship does not impact either student's financial responsibilities related to Housing or required meal plans. The Student Code of Conduct and all other University policies apply to both as individual students. All enrolled students living on campus are responsible for their financial obligations.
- PCAs who are allowed to stay overnight in University Housing are expected to abide by the Housing & Residence Life Policies and Procedures. Housing violations may result in the loss of permission for that PCA to assist the student in University housing. If the PCA is disruptive or unable to maintain appropriate boundaries in classes, the University may determine that the specific PCA will not be allowed to accompany the student inside the classroom.
- **Student's Responsibilities**
  - Submit appropriate documentation to DSS that supports the necessity of having a PCA attend class with the SWD or live in/have access to University housing.
  - Secure a PCA prior to attending any university-related activity (i.e., orientation, housing move-in day, or class attendance).
- Ensure that DSS is provided name/contact information for all PCAs who will be working within University Housing or academic buildings. If the attendant is employed by an agency, provide the name/contact information for the agency.
- Ensure that if personnel changes occur, updated information will be provided to DSS.
- Direct the activities of the PCA while at the University of Montevallo.
- Have a back-up plan or alternative plan of action should the regular PCA not be available to work with him/her on a particular day or in a particular class.
- Follow the University's policies and abide by the Student Code of Conduct.
- Pay for all PCA services or secure payment through a third party.

### **Personal Care Attendant's Responsibilities**

- Follow all applicable university policies, regulations, and procedures.
- Request a guest/vendor parking permit if necessary. Vehicle information can be provided to the UM Police Department, which may verify need with DSS as appropriate.
- Make arrangements with student's faculty as to where to sit in class (if needed to meet the needs of the student during class).
- Allow the student to take responsibility for his/her own progress in class.
- Refrain from participating in class discussions.
- Refrain from discussing any confidential information about the student with faculty, staff, or students.

*\*\*PCAs do not take in-class notes or proctor/scribe exams for the student. DSS will coordinate individuals for in-class academic needs.*

### **University's Responsibilities**

- Establish reasonable policies and procedures and ensure that these are available to all students including those requesting PCA services.
- Address academic or program access needs for a student with a physical, sensory, learning, or emotional disability.
- Provide reasonable accommodations to address the student's disability within the classroom, housing, and other service areas of the University. Accommodations are determined through DSS based on documentation provided and student interviews.

Students needing housing or academic access for a PCA should contact DSS upon enrollment to document need and provide required information. Any student dissatisfied with a decision or action concerning a PCA may appeal by contacting the Dean of Students.

### **Priority Registration**

- Allows students with disabilities more flexibility in scheduling classes in a manner that meets the needs associated with their disability (e.g., timing of medication or treatments, mobility concerns, excessive fatigue or the need for extended time on tests).
- Allows DSS to coordinate services more efficiently, such as when needing to hire sign language interpreters or obtain alternate format materials.
- When approved, it typically begins with the second advising/pre-registration period (after initial orientation/registration as a new student). It is **generally only approved for students who are actively using accommodations** coordinated through the DSS office.
- **Students eligible for priority registration should contact DSS (in person, phone or email) as soon as the academic advisor has entered the student's usual Banner registration PIN (each semester).** DSS will then authorize the earlier registration date.

- Students with disabilities who qualify for this service can register beginning on first day of undergraduate pre-registration, assuming they have been advised and have contacted DSS.
- Financial or other holds on the student account may block priority registration. **Student is responsible for logging into Banner Self Service and registering themselves.**

### **Reasonable Modification of Attendance or Tardy Policy**

- The University considers attendance to be essential for consistent academic success. Requests for modification of attendance or tardy policies are reviewed on a **case-by-case basis** and **must be well-supported by the medical evidence**. This is typically only approved in cases where a student has a chronic disability condition which could flare up on an unpredictable or intermittent basis, but not require a visit to the doctor, and therefore the student may not have a required medical excuse for the date of the absence. Examples include seizures, diabetic swings, migraines, Crohn’s Disease, or a flare-up of mental health symptoms of panic disorder or major depression. Any of these situations would be familiar to the student and their doctor and appropriate treatment may be to take their prescribed medications, get additional sleep, etc. A medical visit might be unnecessary and costly.
- **Important:** This is not a waiver of attendance but rather a **case-by-case process of assessing what reasonable modification of existing policy might allow**. There **may be situations where no modification, or very limited modification, of the attendance policy will be possible**. The determination of whether there can be additional flexibility will be an interactive process between DSS and the faculty, reviewing the syllabus regarding (in-person or remote synchronous) attendance and make-up policies for the class.
- It can be difficult or impossible to “make up” events such as interacting with guest speakers, science labs, group presentations, or performances, etc. There may be times when no “penalty” might be applied, yet due to the absence no participation points can be earned (Examples include policies that “drop” student a letter grade for exceeding a specified number vs. policies that simply provide 2 points for each class attended). **DSS cannot require faculty to award participation points for days when students are absent.**
- The syllabus will be reviewed to assess how the faculty member handles other “university approved” absences (such as class field trips, athletic participation, theater or music performances, etc.). Students should carefully examine attendance and tardy policies on each syllabus, and then discuss their specific needs with the DSS office. If attendance modification is recommended, students typically have the obligation to contact faculty regarding each absence – before the absence if possible, or as soon as possible afterward. The student is responsible for contacting faculty regarding any missed assignments and must turn in such work within agreed-upon deadlines. Faculty are encouraged to contact DSS if the number of absences exceeds the agreed upon modification and students’ grades may be impacted.

- Tardiness, or the need to occasionally leave class unexpectedly, may also be addressed in the modification statement for students dealing with a disability condition with unpredictable flare-ups such as Crohn's, migraines, or diabetes. The student might be slightly late, or need to leave in the midst of class, without disclosing a medical explanation in front of other students. Modification of tardy policy might also be applicable when a student is dealing with an unusual mobility issue (having to use a different wheelchair route due to construction, or an unusually heavy thunderstorm impacting travel for student who uses canes, crutches or a wheelchair.) Students should use priority registration to the extent possible to arrange class times/locations to avoid routine tardiness.

### **Request for Notification to First Responders**

- If a student believes they will need assistance during an emergency evacuation of their residence hall (due to a medical or disability- related reason) and would like their name and room assignment to be included on a voluntary local fire department notification list, the student should contact the UM Police Station to complete the required form.
- This is a voluntary list which will make student residential location information available to local emergency responders by the UM Police Department. **Students are fully responsible for keeping that information up-to-date if they change buildings or rooms. Neither Housing nor DSS will notify the UMPD if a student changes rooms or buildings.**
- Students may visit or call the UMPD @ 205- 665-6155 for more information or complete the form at the UM Police Department.

### **Testing Accommodations**

Test accommodations vary widely and must be logically justified by the documentation provided to the office. Possible accommodations include, but are not limited to, extended time, distraction-reduced testing environment, use of text-to-speech or voice dictation software, screen magnification or screen reader software, use of a CCTV or large print tests, permission to use a calculator or spellcheck on a test, or permission to write on a test or type answers instead of using a scantron type answer form.

Accommodations do not include changes or reductions in the length or content of a test or the ability to retake a test if not passed. Some students may have a medical need to reschedule a test, and such requests are handled on a case-by-case basis.

The DSS office is available to proctor exams if faculty cannot reasonably handle the accommodation need or if specific technology is required that is not available in the classroom. The student is responsible for contacting DSS to reserve a testing room, which should be the same day and time as the class unless specific permission is obtained from faculty member regarding a need to test at another time.

### **Online Assessments:**

If tests, quizzes or exams in a course will be administered online, DSS proctoring is typically unnecessary. Online tests may only be scheduled in a DSS Testing room with specific permission. Generally, the only

modification for online assessments is for faculty to extend the timer within Canvas. Students are encouraged to send faculty a reminder before each test reminding them about timer.

If faculty are using test monitoring software, they may need to make adjustments for other accommodations, and they should contact DSS for guidance.

### **In-person Assessments:**

#### *Student Responsibilities:*

- **Schedule the test with DSS (by phone or email).** Emails should include the course number, faculty name, and the date/time that the class is taking the test. If a student believes they need to start early to avoid missing another class, that information should also be included. Multiple exams may be scheduled at one time for one or more classes based off syllabus schedule. **(Note: test scheduling procedures are subject to change once the testing module of the DSS Portal goes live.)**
- **DSS requests notice of three (3) business days from students, so there is sufficient time to communicate with faculty member and obtain test and any associated instructions.** In emergencies or other highly unusual circumstances, DSS may be able to accommodate late scheduling, **but DSS cannot guarantee the ability to proctor a test or exam if we receive less than 3 days' notice.**
- **DSS requests two 2 weeks' notice for scheduling final exams, due to significant increase in testing on those weeks.**
- Continually check university email in case faculty or DSS reply with a needed change in day, time or other information relevant to the test.
- Student reports to DSS at the day/time for the test. DSS asks students not to arrive more than 10 minutes prior to designated test time and to bring all needed materials- including pen, pencil, calculators, or Scantron forms.

#### *DSS Responsibilities:*

- Email faculty member to request test and relevant instructions.
- Proctor/Read/Scribe the test as appropriate.
- Return the test to the faculty member via preferred return method.

#### *Faculty Responsibilities:*

- Communicate to DSS pertinent details about the test and preferred return method via a **DSS Testing Agreement** (completed inside the DSS Faculty Portal).
- Test may be emailed to [DSSTest@montevallo.edu](mailto:DSSTest@montevallo.edu) , uploaded to the DSS Faculty Portal, or delivered to DSS in person. (Please do not use Hand Mail.)
- Attach/send or describe fully any resources student is allowed to use during the test (charts, books, maps, calculators, etc.). If other students will be given extra credit opportunities during or at the end of the test, be sure to include that for students taking tests in DSS.

***Students taking exams in the DSS office are expected to adhere to DSS and University policies regarding academic honesty. All testing rooms have video & audio recording/surveillance and***

***recordings may be used if students are charged with academic dishonesty. If students suspected of using unauthorized resources, tests will be stopped and an incident report will be sent to faculty member. Video of the incident will also be sent to faculty.***

## **Service Animals**

The University of Montevallo recognizes that service animals can play an important role in facilitating the independence of some individuals with certain types of disabilities. Therefore, an appropriately trained animal, under the control of an individual with a disability, may be allowed in most campus facilities where animals/pets are not permitted.

### **Definition**

The 2008 Amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act re-defined a service animal as: "...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...The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors".

Key changes include the following:

- The law clarified that animals other than dogs, such as cats, ferrets, monkeys, etc., are not recognized as service animals. (Miniature horses are defined as appropriate for some settings, but would not generally be appropriate on campus based on the needs of the animal.)
- Service animals are required to be leashed or harnessed except when performing work or tasks where such tethering would interfere with the dog's ability to perform.

Existing regulations that were clarified or formalized include the following:

- Dogs whose sole function is "the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship" are not considered service dogs under the ADA.
- "The crime deterrent effects" of an animal's presence do not qualify that animal as a service animal and "an animal individually trained to provide aggressive protection, such as an attack dog, is not appropriately considered a service animal."

A dog that meets the ADA definition is permitted to accompany the individual with a disability to class meetings, administrative offices, programs, field trips, or inside residence halls. Handlers who plan to

use a service dog in UM facilities are encouraged to contact DSS, who can assist in providing any other needed accommodations (alt formats, classroom accommodations, etc.) and assist with any inquiries regarding the dog.

UM officials may appropriately ask the handler: a) if the dog is a service animal required because of a disability, and b) what disability-related work or tasks the dog has been trained to perform. No certifications, training documents, or disability paperwork will be requested. The University does request up-to-date rabies vaccination records for service dogs that will be living in University Housing and routinely attending classes as a public health/safety issue. It is helpful (although not required) for DSS to know the type of service dog, a description of the service dog (e.g., weight, breed, etc.) and the dog's name. A photo can also be helpful in allowing DSS to effectively communicate and confirm the dog's access rights to other campus officials.

### **Expectation regarding Service Animals**

Infraction of any of the following behaviors or policies may result in the temporary or permanent exclusion of the service dog from campus property.

- Compliance with City and State Ordinances/Laws: All individuals must abide by current city ordinances/laws pertaining to licensing and vaccination requirements for service dogs. It is the responsibility of the owner/handler of the animal to know about these ordinances and/or laws.
- Health and Immunization: Dogs to be housed in UM residence halls must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. Current rabies vaccination tags (as appropriate) must be attached to a collar or harness worn by the service dog or provided to administrators upon request.
- Limited Documentation: Individuals with a disability with a qualified service dog do not have to show disability documentation nor training certification for the service animal. UM officials may, however, appropriately ask the individual a) whether the service dog is required because of the person's disability, and b) what work or tasks the dog is trained to perform, if the need for the dog is not obvious.
- Control: A service dog must be always under the full control of its handler, typically on a harness or leash. If the handler is unable (because of the disability) to use a harness or leash, or if the use of a harness or leash would interfere with the service dog's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, then the dog must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice commands, signals, or other effective means).
- Care: The care and supervision of the service dog is the responsibility of the handler. Service dogs should not be left alone for extended periods of time but should be crated or leashed if left in a residence hall room while the student is away from the room for more than a few minutes. Dogs may not be left unattended in a residence hall overnight, or during any university closing. Students will be fully responsible for the cost of any intervention on the part of the university should a dog be found unattended or neglected.
- Disruptive or Out-of-Control Behavior: This can include aggressive behavior, urinating or defecating in housing or other campus buildings, excessive barking, biting, or otherwise disturbing the living or learning environment.
- Hygiene and Cleanliness: Regular grooming should be utilized as appropriate to keep animal odor to a minimum. If a service dog's odor is strong and disruptive to other individuals, the handler will be directed to bathe the dog prior to returning to that facility (classroom, dining hall, offices, etc.). Adequate flea prevention and control must be maintained. Repeated occurrences may result in the

service dog being temporarily barred from the residence hall or classrooms until steps are taken to comply with the rules regarding cleanliness.

- **Waste Cleanup:** Service dog handlers must clean up after the animal, unless they are unable to do so because of their disability. If a disability prevents the handler from cleaning up after the dog, this information must be provided to DSS and/or Housing offices, as appropriate. The student handler may be required to hire someone to provide this clean-up service. The university will notify handler of convenient locations of containers for disposal of animal waste.

### **Emergency Response & Service Dogs**

In the event of an emergency, response teams should be trained to recognize service dogs, and it should be noted that service dogs and their handlers are considered a team. Every effort should be made to keep the handler and their animal together. Just as with humans, dogs can become disoriented from smoke, fire alarms, sirens, etc., and act outside their usual manner. In such instances, the dog may bark, appear nervous or act in a protective manner regarding its handler. The animal should be viewed as acting in the appropriate manner given an emergency and should not be considered harmful. While all reasonable efforts should be made to keep the handler with the service dog, the emergency responders' first responsibilities will be to students/employees, which could necessitate leaving the animal behind in certain evacuation circumstances.

### **Conflicting Disability Needs**

Some individuals have severe allergies or extreme phobias to dogs that could rise to the level of disability. Should students, faculty or staff experience such concerns, they should contact DSS and/or Human Resources to disclose their needs and provide documentation. DSS and/or HR will attempt to document and accommodate the disability needs of all involved parties and explore solutions as quickly as possible.

Any student dissatisfied with a decision or action concerning a service animal may appeal by contacting the Chief Student Affairs Officer.

### **Service Dogs in Training**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assures people with disabilities who are accompanied by service animals that they will not be excluded from public places or activities, nor charged any additional fees, because they are accompanied by their service dog. However, the ADA does not provide the same protection to a service dog in training (SDIT). Alabama state law (§21-7-4) provide rights of access for individuals who are training service animals and Montevallo recognizes the value of training such animals.

Because Alabama state law does not clarify further the use of the phrase "a person training a service animal," the University of Montevallo has established a definition of a SDIT based on accepted practices suggested by Assistance Dogs International (ADI). "A service-dog-in-training is a dog, accompanied by its trainer ("a person training a service animal"), that is undergoing individual training to provide specific disability-related work or service for an individual with a disability. This does not include basic obedience training or socialization of puppies who may later become task-trained service animals. Thus, adult dogs are recognized as being "in training" to provide disability-specific assistance only after they have completed an earlier period of socialization (obedience training, being house broken, getting acclimated to public places/activities as pets), typically done after the dog is 12-18 months old. A

service animal trainer may bring such dog onto campus and interact with the campus community in public areas, campus offices, and so on.

As SDIT in Alabama are only given access rights when accompanied by a trainer who is actively engaged in the training process, they will typically **not** be allowed to live in University housing, nor be present in other areas of campus except those places where all students are welcome to bring pets. Similarly, puppies who are being raised/trained in preparation for participating in formal service animal training are not permitted in University housing or on campus except where pets are allowed. Requests for exceptions for adult dogs in later stages of tasks training will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Technology Use in the Classroom**

- Students may be approved to use a variety of technologies in the classroom. This can include permission to audio record the lecture to supplement their notetaking. (The ability to audio record lectures was provided as an example of “reasonable accommodation” in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.)
- Students can be asked to stop any recording if personal or confidential information on which they will not be tested is being shared. If students would be expected to stop taking notes by hand due to the nature of a class discussion, then recordings can also be restricted. Recordings might be made with digital audio recorders, phone, or computer software, or via “smart pen” technology.
- Students may be asked to sign an agreement (available from DSS) barring them from sharing with others or posting recordings online. If signed, a violation of such an agreement may result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct.
- Students may also request permission to use a laptop or tablet for notetaking based on disability-related reasons (arthritis, hand tremors, dyslexia, fine finger coordination difficulties, etc.). Other students may need to bring magnification systems for viewing the board or screen, or request faculty wear a microphone for an assistive listening device. Other students may need to access their cell phone for disability reasons during class (e.g., use as a microphone for notetaking software or for hearing aids, or to monitor cardiac conditions or blood glucose).
- Students should always request permission as an accommodation if technology necessary for their disability is limited by class policy. Inappropriate use of any technology in the classroom (e.g. texting, social media use, online shopping) may result in a faculty referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

### **Temporary Disability Accommodations**

- Students who experience a temporary illness or injury may be eligible for DSS services on a short-term basis. Any student in need of accessible parking, modification of attendance policy, assignment deadlines, or assistance with tests, notes, etc. should be referred to DSS.
- Federal law requires that the University use a case-by-case approach in determining the need for accommodation based on expected duration, severity, and impact on “major life activities”. DSS staff will assess each situation and provide the student with accommodations when appropriate.

- DSS is not typically involved in reviewing medical excuses for the typical short-term medical situations (flu, bronchitis, etc.) but will be happy to advise if a situation becomes significant. DSS does not provide transportation but can coordinate accessible parking permits for short-term use.

### **Third Party Testing Documentation (testing accommodations related to Graduate School, Certification, or Licensure exams)**

- Some programs require or encourage students to take examinations for entry or completion of the degree, and other students will take exams for admission into graduate school, for licensure or certification after graduation from our programs.
- Each agency will have their own processes and documentation guidelines, sometimes having detailed requirements as to the nature and age of documentation and may require letters from the student and/or the DSS office. Some agencies have deadlines for test accommodation requests that may be earlier than the typical deadline. Commonly requested accommodations could include extended time, distraction-reduced environment, sign language interpreter, paper vs. online format, large print, scribe to fill in scantron forms, etc.
- To effectively meet such needs, DSS requests notice of **five (5) business days** to prepare paperwork for the various academic and professional tests. Students should contact DSS well in advance of deadlines and research what documentation is needed. Efforts will be made to meet all requests, but late requests cannot be guaranteed.

## **Appendix/Procedures**

### **Procedure for Academic Accommodation Requests**

- Student completes the online DSS Application and submits disability documentation, as appropriate. DSS staff will review that information and schedule an intake meeting to obtain additional information and discuss the student's accommodations needs and DSS procedures.
- If student agrees with DSS recommendations for accommodation, then the student will submit a request for Faculty Notification Letters (FNL) to be delivered via email. (If student disagrees with DSS recommendations for accommodations, then the student may appeal the decision using the Student Disability Grievance Procedure.)
- Student will receive duplicate when FNL is emailed to faculty. Faculty will be able to review students' accommodation needs via the DSS Faculty Portal. Student is responsible for following up on that email with each professor, via phone, zoom, email or in person, to discuss the specifics of which accommodations might be needed in a specific class and allow for discussion of implementation. The same accommodation, extended time on tests, for instance, might be handled differently in various classes, depending on the nature of the class, the types of tests, or possible scheduling issues on the part of student or faculty. If the faculty and student have questions regarding implementation either party may contact DSS.

- If faculty feel that a specific recommendation interferes with an essential element of a course, they should contact DSS immediately. DSS will engage in an interactive process with the student and faculty member, reviewing the accommodation recommendation and the impact on essential components of the course or an assignment. If a resolution cannot be found, then the request is forwarded to Chair and/or Academic Dean for review. Chair/Dean will continue the interactive process with all parties and make a recommendation.
- Student may appeal to the Chief Academic Affairs Officer, who may review the request, all supporting documentation, and meet with involved parties as necessary.
- The Chief Academic Affairs Officer makes a decision and notifies all parties in writing. That decision is final. (Last updated 2021)

### **Disability-Related Modification or Substitution of Academic Requirements Request Procedure**

- Student contacts Disability Support Services, and provides documentation of disability and makes a request for modification/substitution of an academic program requirement.
- DSS Staff will confer with Department Chair and/or Dean to review the request, including a case-by-case review of the essential elements/technical standards of program and/or course.
- If documentation supports the request, and DSS agrees that the request does not because a substantial alteration of the essential elements/technical standards, DSS Staff will forward the request, as well as the recommendations of the Chair/Dean, to the VPAA/Provost. (See 3.)
- If documentation does not support the request or DSS and Faculty/Administrators believe there will be substantial alteration of essential elements/technical standards, request will be denied. The student may appeal this decision to the VPAA/Provost.
- VPAA/Provost reviews the request, recommendations, supporting documentation if needed, and may consult with DSS Staff, Faculty, and/or Administrators as necessary. Provost notifies all parties of decision in writing. The decision of the VPAA/Provost is final.

### **Pregnant and Parents Students (Title IX Accommodations)**

- The University is dedicated to supporting the academic success of pregnant and parenting students. This includes prohibiting discrimination against pregnant and parenting students in all academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs or activities.
- Pregnant or parenting students needing assistance with appropriate Title IX accommodations can contact the Title IX Coordinator, Mr. Alex Maxwell (205-665-6020).
- Expectant students who may need to miss class or other activities due to pregnancy related issues should discuss their situation with involved faculty and/or the staff members listed above so that alternative arrangements can be planned. Breastfeeding students may request access to the University's lactation room located in Ramsay Hall by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.
- Although healthy pregnancies without complications are not considered a disability covered within the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), complications or other medical issues that may result from pregnancy may be considered temporary disabilities. An expectant student needing temporary

disability accommodations for a medical situation related to pregnancy, including preferential parking, may contact the Disability Support Services office at 205-665-6250 for assistance and documentation guidelines. (Revised January 2026)

## **Student Disability Grievance Procedure**

- The University has adopted the following internal grievance procedure for students to provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by the U.S. Department of Education regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Department of Justice regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.
- A complaint must be filed in writing, containing the name and contact information of the person(s) filing it, and a brief description of the alleged violation of the regulation(s), including relevant dates and university employees or locations.
- Grievances should be addressed to the Disability Compliance Officer, Station 6250, University of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL 35115. If the grievance is regarding the Disability Support Services Office or specifically names the Disability Compliance Officer, also the Director of Disability Services, then the complainant may choose to address it to the Equal Opportunity Officer, Station 6055, University of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL 35115.
- A complaint must be filed within 30 calendar days of the alleged act(s) of discrimination or the complainant becoming aware of the alleged violation.
- An appropriate investigation shall follow filing of the complaint. The investigation shall be conducted by the Disability Compliance Officer and may include the Disability Compliance Committee or other University officials as appropriate. If the grievance names DSS or the Disability Compliance Officer, then the EO Officer will guide the investigation. Any University personnel named in complaint will be notified within 10 calendar days of receipt of the complaint.
- The Disability Compliance Officer, or EO Officer as appropriate, shall issue a written determination regarding the complaint and the description of the resolution, if any, and a copy forwarded to the complainant(s) no later than 30 calendar days after its filing. The Disability Compliance Officer shall maintain the confidential files and records relating to grievances for seven (7) years.
- The decision of the Disability Compliance Officer, or EO Officer, may be appealed within 15 calendar days to the senior administrator of the applicable University division. The senior administrator will review the complaint and issue a decision within 15 calendar days. The decision of senior administrator is final.
- The right to a prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint filed shall not be impaired by the student's pursuit of other remedies, such as filing a Section 504 or ADA complaint with the appropriate state or federal department/agency.
- This procedure shall protect the substantive rights of the interested persons to meet appropriate due process standards and to assure the University of Montevallo complies with the intent of Section 504 and the ADA and implementing regulations.