

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM**

**VSU**

**University Counseling Center  
Students with Disabilities Program**

**disABILITIES**



**NOT Inabilities**

**Memorial Hall Room 409**

<http://www.vsu.edu/pages/323.asp>

**(804) 524-5061 phone**

**(804) 524-5978 fax**

**(804) 524-5838 TTY**

**HANDBOOK**



## TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION.....	1
PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION.....	2
Admission.....	2
Goal.....	2
Objectives.....	2
Disability Definition.....	3
ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICE.....	4
HOW TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS.....	5
Self-disclosure.....	5
Confidentiality of Documentation.....	6
Intake Process.....	6
Accommodation Letter.....	7
DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES.....	8
Documentation.....	8
General Documentation Guidelines.....	8
Learning Disabilities.....	9
Attention Deficit Disorder.....	10
Hearing Impairment.....	11

Physical Impairments.....	11
Visual Impairments.....	11
Health Related Impairments.....	12
Mental Impairments.....	12
DISABILITY SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS.....	14
POLICY AND PROCEDURES.....	18
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	20
Complaint Procedure.....	21
STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.....	22
Approaching Faculty Members.....	22
Tips for Students.....	22
First Day of Class.....	23
During the Semester.....	23
The End of the Semester.....	24
Memory Strategies.....	25
Ten Traps of Studying.....	25
Frequently Asked Questions.....	29
APPENDIX.....	30
Glossary of Disability Terms.....	34

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER**  
**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**INTRODUCTION**

This handbook is designed for students with disabilities at Virginia State University. It will explain how to access services and accommodations provided by the Students with Disabilities Program (SWDP). The program provides services and coordinates accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities. In addition, the program may advocate for student rights or serve as a liaison to University faculty, staff and administration and external agencies. Students may use this handbook as a guide to help locate specific disability services.

**For additional information, please contact:**  
**University Counseling Center**  
**Students with Disabilities Program**  
**Memorial Hall, Room 409**  
**Lee Street**  
**Petersburg, Virginia 23806**  
**Voice: (804) 524-5061**  
**TTY: (804) 524-5838**  
**FAX: (804) 524-5978**  
**E-mail: [www.vsu.edu/students/stuaff.htm](http://www.vsu.edu/students/stuaff.htm)**

This handbook is available in alternative format upon request.

**Note:** Please understand that the Handbook for Students with Disabilities Program only highlights University policies, procedures and practices. It is provided generally for your personal education and information. Therefore, it cannot be construed as a legal document or contract, nor does it superseded applicable Federal, State, of local laws or University policies. Nothing in the Handbook for Students with Disabilities Program should be construed as legal advice or a legal opinion.

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM**

**PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION STATEMENT**

***Virginia State University is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students who qualify in meeting the University's academic admissions requirements.***

Embracing the university's general mission to promote and sustain academic programs in a design most responsive to the needs and endeavors of individuals and groups within its scope of influence, the Students with Disabilities Program's mission is to provide a system of support for individuals with disabilities through equal access, empowerment, support, resources, advocacy, collaboration and outreach throughout the university campus and community. The Students with Disabilities Program works closely with faculty and staff in an advisory capacity and develops reasonable accommodations as mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to allow students with disabilities to fully participate in all of the programs offered on campus.

***Admissions***

Qualified students shall not, on the basis of a disabling condition, be denied admission or be subjected to discrimination in the recruitment or admissions process. A student with a disability must meet the same criteria as any other student applying for admission.

***Our Goal***

The goal of the Students with Disabilities Program is to ensure that all qualified students who meet admission criteria and the criteria for disabilities services receive reasonable accommodations and appropriate academic adjustments as outlined in the ADA guidelines.

**Our Objectives**

- Promote the success, dignity, and independence of students by assisting them to develop awareness of their disability-related needs, self-advocacy, and academic skills.
- Consult with faculty, staff, and students to determine the need for reasonable accommodations and technical support services.

- Educate the college community to understand the inclusion of students with disabilities.
- Eliminate the physical, technical and attitudinal barriers that limit the range of opportunities for students with disabilities.
- Maintain and protect the confidentiality of student records as required by the law.
- Serve as information and referral service on disability issues by providing current and accurate information regarding disability products, programs and services to inquiring students, prospective students, faculty and staff.

### **Disability Definition**

#### **A disability is defined as**

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- Has a record of such impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

major life activities including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working caring for oneself, or performing manual task

#### **Conditions that may be eligible for disability services include, but is not limited to the following:**

- Attention Deficit Disorders
- Blind/Low Vision
- Cerebral Palsy
- Deafness/Hard of Hearing
- Developmental Disorders
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Learning Disabilities
- Physical Disabilities
- Psychiatric Disabilities
- Speech and Language Disabilities
- Traumatic Brain Injury

**Temporary conditions and the following characteristics that do not substantially limit a major life activity are ineligible for services through the Students with Disabilities Program. These may include:**

- Eye color, hair color, height, weight (except in unusual circumstances where obesity is the result of a medical condition).
- Advance age in and of itself is not a disability (although severe hearing loss, arthritis, and Alzheimer's disease could be considered disabilities).
- Temporary impairments, such as a cold, a broken leg, sprain or infection that is expected to heal quickly.
- Illiteracy or poverty.
- Pregnancy
- Persons who have English as their second language.

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES**

The Coordinator is designated to develop and maintain a system of services at the University for students with disabilities that will enable them to access all academic programs, services and activities. The University may not discriminate on the basis of disability. The Coordinator assists the University to ensure that the programs it offers, including extracurricular activities are accessible to students with disabilities. The University can do this in a number of ways, which may include the following:

Reasonable accommodations and appropriate academic adjustment support each student's academic needs shall be made on an individual basis.

Academic adjustment(s) shall be made and recommended by the SWDP staff.

However, essential criteria for courses, programs, services, activities and/or facilities are maintained. Steps shall be taken to ensure that no otherwise qualified student will be excluded from participation in any programs or activities due to the absence of reasonable educational auxiliary aids.

A **reasonable accommodation** is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, activity or facility that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to similarly student without disabilities.

An **academic accommodation** makes it possible for a student with a disability to learn the material presented and for a professor to fairly evaluate the student's understanding of the material without interference because of a disability. Examples of academic accommodations may include the following:

- a. Use of interpreters, scribes, readers, and/or note-takers

- b. Taped classes
- c. Extended time on tests, projects and papers
- d. Quiet, distraction-free environment for taking exams
- e. Use of aids such as calculators
- f. Use of computers in class

**It is the student's responsibility to discuss his or her accommodations with the appropriate professor.**

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING AND RECEIVING ACCOMMODATION**

Virginia State University is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations (e.g., academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services, and modifications to policies, practices and/or procedures) to allow identified students with disabilities access to academic programs. The process in which students are provided accommodation is an ongoing, engaging, and interactive process. An accommodation identified at the beginning of a semester may require modification and/or a re-evaluation of its effectiveness toward meeting the needs of the student. To be eligible for services in the Students with Disabilities Program, a student must have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. An individual is considered to have a disability if that individual either (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of his or her major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. Students are only eligible for accommodations under 1 and 2. Students with perceived disabilities are protected from discrimination, but are not entitled to accommodation. When a disability or need for accommodation is not known or obvious, the University will require medical documentation to establish that a student has an ADA/Section 504 disability and needs the requested accommodation.

### **Processing Procedures**

Students [**Incoming Freshmen Only**] needing an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act must complete the Admissions Accommodations Form included in the Admissions Acceptance Packet and mail it at least 60 days prior to enrollment to the Office of Students with Disabilities Program or contact the Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator. The sooner this form is submitted, the more time the Office of SWDP will have to evaluate the information, work with the student to identify appropriate accommodations, and arrange for the accommodations. This does not preclude students from requesting accommodations later in the semester; however, any accommodations provided will be prospective only. All students, including students with disabilities, are responsible and accountable for ascertaining and understanding the essential requirements of the academic programs for which they are enrolled. The Students with Disabilities Program



Coordinator will refer and work with all requests for adjustments to the essential requirements of academic programs to the appropriate faculty administrators of the program and provide assistance as needed to facilitate their review and determination decision.

All other [returning] students request for accommodations must be in writing each semester and accompanied with a copy of the current academic schedule of the individual requesting the accommodation. The Office of Student with Disabilities Program will provide the student with accommodation letter(s) to be forwarded to instructors within 10 business days of receipt of the request. This does not preclude students from requesting accommodations later in the semester; however, any accommodations provided will be prospective only.

The Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator or Counselor will determine if additional medical or psychological information is needed and will furnish the student with any forms/questionnaires necessary for the health care provider to complete.

The Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator or Counselor will evaluate information to determine eligibility for accommodations within the guidelines of Section 504 and the ADA as necessary.

The Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator or Counselor will meet with the student to review and/or identify accommodation needs for each course enrolled at the beginning of each semester. An accommodation letter for each course enrolled will be completed for students to deliver to the respective professor.

Students needing accommodations for non-academic activities such as housing must submit the Admissions Accommodations Form included in the Admissions Acceptance Packet and mail it at least 60 days prior to enrollment to the Office of Students with Disabilities Program or contact the Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator. This does not preclude students from requesting accommodations later in the semester; however, accommodations provided will be prospective only.

Students are responsible for providing a copy of the syllabus for each course enrolled as soon as the professor makes it available to the Office of Students with Disabilities Program.

Students are responsible for giving their accommodation letters to their course instructors and professors. The student and the respective course instructor signs and dates the letter(s) and a copy is returned by the student to the Students with Disabilities Program office for placement in his/her file.

The Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator will obtain clarification and verification from the appropriate academic program administrator and faculty member that the essential academic requirements for the course of study were determined under the right process and standards as necessary, particularly when said requirements are not clearly documented in the syllabus or other mediums, to assist with the identification of appropriate accommodation that will enable the student to successfully fulfill course requirements or access university activities and services outside the classroom.

The Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator will take steps to acquire or purchase needed accommodation upon receipt of a request that is consistent with the current documented needs of the individual requesting the accommodation. A concerted effort will be made to provide needed accommodation in a timely and reasonable manner unless extenuating circumstances or conditions dictate otherwise. Extenuating circumstances or conditions may include but are not limited to the following: emergencies or crises, changes to the assessment for accommodation, the availability of a specific assistive equipment, device, auxiliary aid, or service, including manufacturers' terms and conditions for shipping, handling, and delivery.

The Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator will follow up with the status/progress of accommodation requests to ensure timely delivery. In situations when requested accommodation aids or services are not available or deliverable in the time frame needed, the Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator and the individual requesting the accommodation will engage the interactive process to identify other possible interim alternatives for solution. The Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator and/or Counselor will notify students of the availability of accommodation aids or services. Students will be responsible and accountable for accessing the accommodation aids and services supplied in response to their request(s).

If a student determines that a provided accommodation is not working, the student will notify the Office of SWDP and together they will figure out additional or alternative accommodations.

### **Appeal Process**

An appropriate accommodation under the ADA is an ongoing process. The individual receiving the accommodation may request a re-evaluation of their request at any time from the Students with Disabilities Program Coordinator. Upon receipt of a request for re-evaluation, the interactive process will be implemented in order to deal with any additional needs and/or revisions to the initial requests.

### **Complaint Procedure**

The University is committed to following the procedures for processing grievances as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Virginia State University, Policy #105, Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Policy is in place to support the enforcement and compliance of these procedures. Qualified students with disabilities who feel that they have been denied appropriate accommodations are encouraged to contact the Virginia State University's 504/ADA Coordinator, Office of Human Resources, P. O. Box 9412, Petersburg, Virginia 23806, (804) 524-5085. Upon notification of a discrimination complaint, the University shall take prompt and appropriate action for resolution. The use of informal means to resolve nondiscriminatory issues within the Students with Disabilities Program is encouraged.

### **Confidentiality**

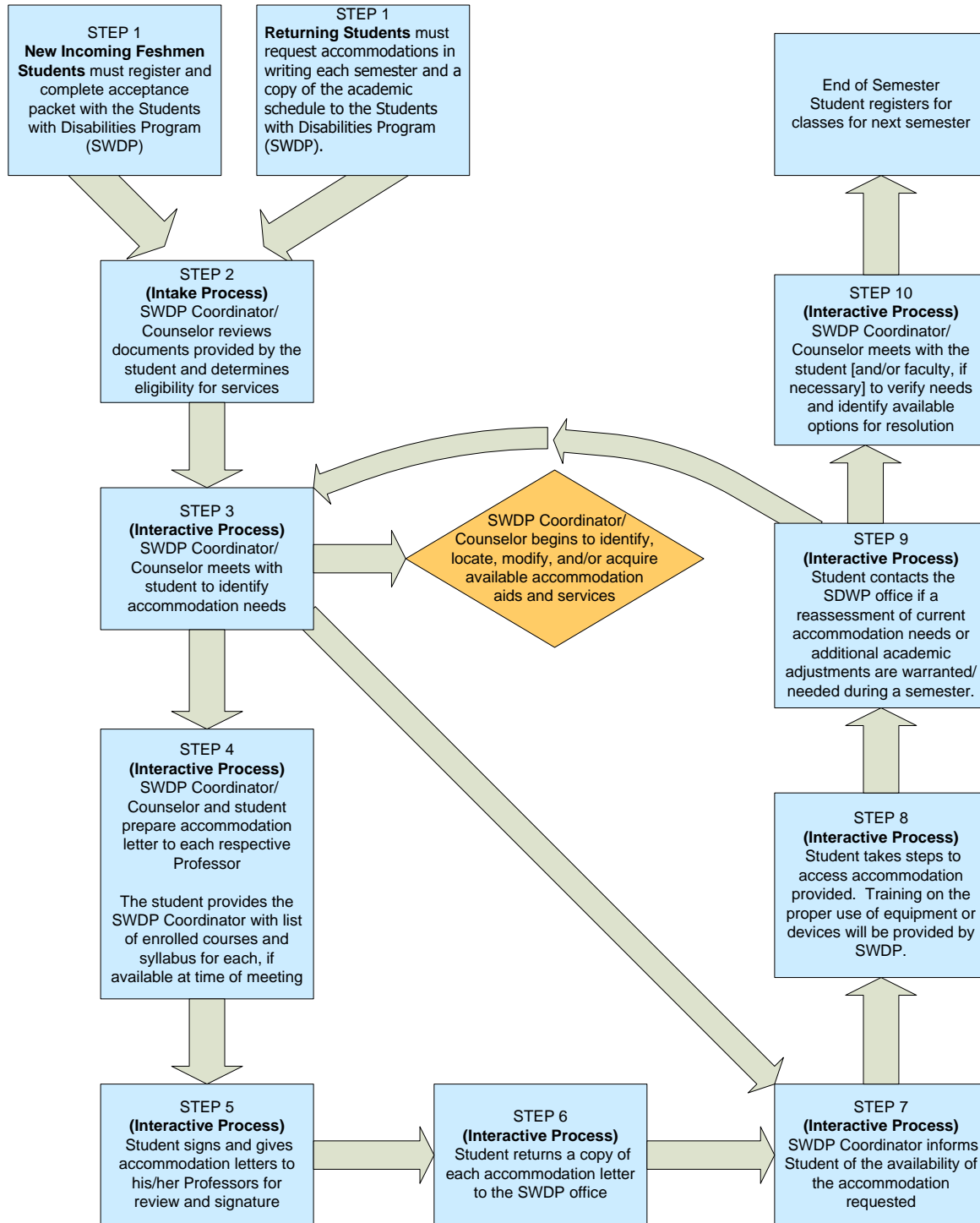
All medical-related information shall be kept confidential and maintained separately from other personnel /academic records. Academic administrators, faculty, and staff in supervisory or managerial positions may be advised of information necessary to make the determinations they are required to make in connection with a request for an

accommodation. First aid and safety personnel may be informed, when appropriate, if the disability might require emergency treatment or if any specific procedures are needed in the case of fire or other evacuations. Government officials investigating compliance with the ADA may also be provided relevant information as requested.

**Students are under no obligation to disclose their disability to the SWDP unless an accommodation is being requested.**

**(see flowchart below)**

FLOW CHART  
 PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING AND RECEIVING  
 EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATION(S)



## **DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES**

### Documentation

**Students are required to submit documentation to determine eligibility in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

#### **General Documentation Guidelines**

Eligibility for services from the Students with Disabilities Program is dependent upon the nature of the disability and its impact on learning. Documentation legitimizes a student's request for accommodation and, in general, includes the following:

- Identification of the nature and extent of the disability.
- Specific information on the functional limitation as related to the academic environment.
- Description of the current course of treatment including medical side effects.
- Prognosis for the disability.
- Recommended reasonable accommodations.
- Letterhead of agency or office; printed name and title of the qualified professional; specialist's signature; address and date; license number; and phone and fax numbers.
- Documentation should be typed or otherwise legible.

Students with physical impairments may not be required to present documentation unless requested by the Students with Disabilities Program.

The Students with Disabilities Program reserves the right to determine eligibility and appropriate services based on the quality, recency of evaluation, and completeness of the documentation submitted. Please review the section on documentation guidelines for specific disabilities.

Documentation is not required until after a student is admitted, but early discussion and documentation allows you to match your choice of college with your needs.

We are best able to provide an equal opportunity when the documentation is thorough complete and current. Students are informed of incomplete documentation and what is still needed.

Documentation should be sent directly to SWDP office and is welcomed anytime.

## **Learning Disabilities**

The following guidelines are provided in interest of assuring that documentation is complete and accurate. To be current, the evaluation should have been completed when the student was an adult (usually older than 15) so that adult scales and instruments were used.

**Qualifications of the Examiner.** The following professionals would generally be considered qualified to evaluate specific learning disabilities: clinical or educational psychologists, school psychologists, neuropsychologist, learning disability specialists and medical doctors. The evaluator's name, title, and professional credentials and affiliation should be provided.

1. A psycho-educational or neuropsychological evaluation that provides a diagnosis of specific learning disability must be submitted. A statement indicating the current status or impact of the learning disability in an academic setting should be included.
2. The evaluation should be based on a comprehensive assessment batteries:
  - **Aptitude.** Average broad cognitive functioning must be demonstrated on an individually administered intelligence test, administered during high school tenure. Subscales/subtest should be listed.
  - **Academic Achievement.** A comprehensive academic achievement battery, which should include current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics and oral and written communication.
  - **Cognitive.** A complete cognitive battery, appropriate for an adult population, with all subtest and standard scores report. Data should logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the student is requesting the accommodation. The test findings should document both the nature and severity of the disability. The following areas should be included:
    - a. attention
    - b. oral language
    - c. fluency/automaticity
    - d. memory/learning (working memory, long term memory, and/or short-term memory)
    - e. visual-perceptual/visual spatial
    - f. visual-motor
    - g. phonological/orthographic processing
    - h. Evidence of processing strengths identified in one or more of the cognitive processing areas listed above.

- A Specific Diagnosis; The diagnostician must use specific language in the documentation. If the report data indicates that a learning disability is present, the evaluator should state this conclusion in the report.
  - Clinical Summary. A diagnosis summary should present a diagnosis of a special learning disability; provide impressions of the testing situation; interpret the testing data; indicate how patterns in cognitive ability, achievement, and information processing reflect the specific learning disability; and the degree to which its impacts the individual in the learning context for which accommodations are being requested.
  - Suggestions for Accommodations. It is helpful for the evaluator to include suggested accommodations based upon the clinical findings.
3. For students just graduating high school, an evaluation reflecting current levels of academic skills should have been administered during their high school tenure; for students who have been out of school for a number of years, documentation will be considered on a case by case basis. Students may be required to submit updated information and/or documentation.
4. Additional documentation that do not constitute sufficient documentation, but that may be submitted in addition to a psychological, psycho-educational, or neuropsychological evaluation are: an individual educational plan, a 504 plan, and/or an educational assessment.

### **Attention Deficit Disorder**

Documentation of ADD or ADHD should be in the form of a report prepared by an appropriate professional (psychiatrist, physician, or psychologist) within the last three years. The report should include the following:

1. A clear statement of ADD or ADHD within the DSM-TV diagnosis.
2. A description of the symptoms that meet the criteria for the diagnosis.
3. A summary of the assessments procedures and evaluation instruments that were used to make the diagnosis.
4. Information about current medication(s) used to treat the disability.
5. Possible side effects of any prescribed medication.
6. A statement of the functional limitations of the impairment.
7. Whether medication or any other form of currently prescribed treatment mitigates the condition.

### **Hearing Impairment**

Documentation of a hearing loss hearing loss should be in the form of a report from an audiologist. This report should include:

1. The result of an audiogram that shows the type of hearing loss (either conductive or sensory neural).
2. The degree of hearing loss.
3. A specific diagnosis.
4. Whether the condition is stable or progressive.
5. Possible side effects of any prescribed medication.
6. Whether the condition is mitigated by medication or hearing aids.
7. A statement of functional limitation(s) caused by the disability.
8. Suggested recommendations for effective and reasonable accommodations.

### **Physical Impairments**

Documentation of mobility impairments should consist of a letter or report from a qualified health care professional (i.e. physician). The letter or report should include the following:

1. The type of disability, a clear diagnosis.
2. A statement of the functional limitation(s) such as any distance limitations.
3. Whether the condition is stable or progressive.
4. Whether the condition is temporary or permanent.
5. Information about the current medication(s) used to treat the disability.
6. Possible side effects of any prescribed medication.
7. Suggested recommendations for effective and reasonable accommodations.

### **Visual Impairments**

Visual impairments are usually defined as disorders in the structure and function of the eye as manifested at least on the following: visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after the best possible correction, a peripheral field so constricted that it affects one's ability to function in an educational setting.



Documentation of visual impairment should consist of a letter or report from an optometrist or ophthalmologist and should include the following:

1. An explanation of the extent of the individual's visual fields.
2. The degree of visual acuity. Whether the condition is stable or progressive.
3. A statement of the functional limitations.
2. Possible side effects of any prescribed aids or medication.
3. Whether visual aids are recommended.
4. Suggested recommendation for effective and reasonable accommodations.

### **Health Related Impairments**

A qualified medical and/or allied health professional (i.e. physician, neurologist, speech and language pathologist, and ophthalmologist) must provide a report that addresses the student's evaluation, diagnosis, and recommendations. As appropriate to the disability, documentation should include the following:

1. A specific diagnosis, tests and/or criteria used to reach the diagnosis.
2. The functional limitations of the impairment.
3. Whether the condition is temporary, permanent, stable or progressive.
4. Whether the condition is mitigated by medication or another form of treatment.
5. Possible side effects of any prescribed medication.
6. A description of situations that may exacerbate the condition.
7. Suggested recommendations for effective and reasonable accommodations.

### **Mental Health Impairments**

Documentation of mental health impairments should consist of a detailed report by a qualified mental Health professional (i.e. psychiatrist, psychologist or licensed clinical social worker with appropriate competencies related to the student's diagnosis). All documentation must be current, within the six months, and should include the following:

1. A complete DSM-IV diagnosis with an accompanying description of the specific symptoms the student experiences.
2. The diagnosis should be based upon a comprehensive clinical interview and psychological testing (when testing is clinically appropriate).
3. A complete description of the impact on academic functioning of the students' symptoms must be provided. Descriptions of the impact

upon study skills, and classroom behavior. Test taking and organizing research would be examples of academic functioning.

4. Possible side effects of any prescribed medication.
5. Whether the condition is mitigated by medication or any other form of of currently prescribed treatment.
6. Recommendations for effective and reasonable accommodation. Diagnostic information and its impact upon student functioning must be related to the academic accommodations that are recommended.

## ***DISABILITY SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS***

### **Learning Resource Room**

The Learning Resource Room, located at the Students with Disabilities Program, provides an environment designed to foster maximum student independence using technological resources. State of the art computer equipment and software are arranged in distraction free cubicles whereby students with disabilities are able to fully access information on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers.

**Assistive technology** refers to a device or service that can be used as a tool by someone with a disability to achieve or maintain function. It can be any item, piece of equipment or product system whether acquired commercially, off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

The assistive technology is available for use by any student with a disability. Individualized training on the use of the equipment and software can be arranged by appointment with the lab assistants. Technical support is provided in a user-friendly computer environment. Assistive Technology software and adaptive equipment are available within the Students with Disabilities Program, Johnston Memorial Library, residence halls and computer labs across campus to include:

#### **(i) Software and Assistive Technology**

EPSON Scanner	CCTV (Closed-circuit television)
Kurzweil 3000	Zoom text
Read Please	Talking calculator
Jaws (speech technology)	CD writer
Open book	Track ball
Inspiration	Tape recorder
Read Write Gold	Books on tape
Co-Writer	QWord
Dragon Naturally Speaking (voice recognition)	Adjustable tables
Large Print for Windows	Microsoft Office Suite
Magnifying monitor screen cover	(Word, Excel, PowerPoint & Access)
Braille Machine	Flipper

**Priority Registration and Scheduling** - Priority registration is available to those students who require it as an academic accommodation. With the advent of web-based registration; however, students are often able to arrange their own course schedule. Students may contact the SWDP to discuss priority registration as an appropriate accommodation. This will be determined on an individual basis. Students who may qualify for priority registration include students with physical mobility impairments.

**Alternate Testing** - Students with disabilities may receive test accommodations determined on an individual basis. "Test" as used in this context; refer to quizzes and examinations taken during the semester in conjunction with an academic class. An Exam Accommodation form is available in the Students with Disabilities Program office. The form should be returned to the office **at least one week** prior to the test date. An example of alternate testing may include an alternate location, separate room, exam proctor, extended time, a reader or scribe, or an interpreter. Students are responsible for meeting with professors to discuss exam considerations at the beginning of the semester. The time allocation for testing is **time and one-half** unless otherwise specified.

**Virginia Relay System and TTY** - A text telephone (TTY) for the hearing impaired or deaf is available for sending and receiving calls (804) 1Q524-5838. Program staff will provide training upon request to students and faculty on the use of the TDD. The Virginia Relay System is an enhancement that enables a person with impaired speech to use the system with his or her own voice, instead of using the TDD. The Virginia Relay System may be accessed by dialing 711 or 1-866-246-9300.

**Interpreters** – translate spoken English to sign language for deaf and severely hearing-impaired students in their respective classes. To ensure that a timely accommodation is received, it is most important to notify the Students with Disabilities Program each semester during the pre-registration period. For incoming students, self-disclosure and requests for this accommodation should be made immediately following notification of admittance to the University.

**Note taking** – assistance may be provided by tape recording lectures, peer note takers, or utilizing the instructor's notes or outline of lecture material. The Students with Disabilities Program screen peer note takers before providing this service. Students who wish to remain anonymous can pick up notes during office hours. Students must attend classes daily. The note taker is not a substitute for class attendance. Review notes daily for completeness. If the notes are unsatisfactory, it

is the student's responsibility to notify the Students with Disabilities Program for resolution.

**Readers** – may be provided for students who have visual impairments, learning disabilities or other disabilities that impact on the student's ability to read standard print. Readers are primarily used for exams.

**Scribes** – may be provided to students who are unable to write due to a physical or visual impairment, learning disability or cognitive disorder that significantly impacts their ability to write or perform fine motor skills. Scribes are primarily used for exams. Scribes do not offer explanations to test questions or the professor's instructions.

**Accessible Classrooms** – may be arranged for students with physical or mobility impairment who need their classes in close proximity to each other or when accessible furniture or seating arrangements are needed in the classroom. Here again, it is important to notify the SWDP each semester during the pre-registration period to ensure that a timely accommodation is received.

**Personal Counseling** – is available to students having issues of adjustment and emotional difficulties. Students may be prescreened and referred to outpatient providers based on the needs of the student, the assessment, and available campus resources.

**Tutors** – Students are referred to the Student Support Services and the Academic Support Center for tutoring. In addition, students are encouraged to communicate with faculty during their posted office hours for assistance.

**Print Alternatives** – Upon request, alternate reformatting will be rendered to qualified students.

**Textbooks in Alternative Format** – The SWDP provides taped, enlarged print or electronic textbooks for students who have visual impairments, learning disabilities or other disabilities that significantly impact the student's ability to read standard print. Students should contact the SWDP office to request textbooks in alternative format at least four weeks prior to the first day of instruction.

**Voter registration assistance** - Students will be offered the opportunity to register to vote during the intake process. Additionally, voter registration forms are available upon request.

**Residence Life** - Students with disabilities shall be provided with comparable, convenient, accessible housing of a scope similar to that of other students. Contact the Department of Residence Life and Housing (804) 524-5011 for accommodations.

**Financial and Employment Assistance** - Students with disabilities shall have equal access to financial aid and employment assistance.

**Other Rules** - Personal assistants, interpreters, note takers, tape recorders, computers and service animals shall be permitted in the classroom.

**Parking** – Policies and procedures governing handicap parking is administered by the VSU Department of Police and Public Safety.

**Personal Assistance** – is not an accommodation provided. Staff in the Students with Disabilities Program will assist students in finding sources that provide this as a service.

**Transportation** - The Students with Disabilities Program will provide transportation to students with mobility impairments in extenuating circumstances but not on a regular basis. Transportation may be provided in instances of potential danger for students (i.e. Ozone Code Red, torrential downpours and snow) at the discretion of the coordinator.

**Transition from High School to College** – The Students with Disabilities Program actively participates in collaborate efforts in providing services to transition programs by presenting workshops, setting up information tables, conversing with parents and students regarding preparing for college. Current activities include attending transition fairs with school systems and other colleges and universities, and collaborating efforts with school representatives and the community-at-large.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Virginia State University is committed to making higher education available to all students with disabilities. The Students with Disabilities promotes an integrated and cohesive environment of equal access to education by providing services that will enable students to attend college.

### **Virginia State University Policy Statement for Students with Disabilities:**

VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (OTHERWISE QUALIFIED STUDENTS). SUCH STUDENTS ARE PROTECTED UNDER SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (PL 93 – 112) AND ITS SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS IN 1978 (29 U.S.C. 794) AND THE VIRGINIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (1085, C. 421, 51.01-46; 1990 C. 458).

### **WHAT IS SECTION 504 the Rehabilitation Act of 1973?**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights statute that guarantees specific rights in federally funded programs and activities to persons who qualify as individuals with disabilities. The objective of Section 504 is to ensure that people with disabilities have opportunities and access to the benefits of all federally funded programs and activities.

#### **Section 504 states:**

*No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall solely by reason of his (or her) disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by or on behalf of any federal or state agency.*

A person with a disability is defined as

- Having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Has a record of such impairment
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

Major life activities are functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

A "qualified individual with a disability" is defined as someone who meets the academic standards requisite to admission or participation in the education program or activity.

Under the provision of section 504...the college may not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students. Students who have self-identified, provided documentation of a disability, and requested reasonable accommodations are entitled to receive approved modifications, or auxiliary aids that enable them to participate in and benefit from all educational programs and activities.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, Subpart E requires institutions of higher education receiving federal financial assistance to ensure that persons with disabilities have an equal opportunity to benefit from all programs, services and activities. An institution of higher education shall not discriminate against persons with disabilities relative to:

- 1) Recruitment and Admissions
- 2) General Treatment of Students
- 3) Provision of Academic Adjustments
- 4) Provision of Housing, Financial or Employment Assistance and Nonacademic Services

What is the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)?

In 1990, The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed, extending equal protection to persons with disabilities in the private sector, public institutions, employment, communications and public accommodations. Under the provision of Title II, it specifies that:

*A qualified individual with a disability means an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices, the removal of architectural communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity.*

**The ADA requires that educators provide qualified individuals with disabilities equal access to programs and services.**



## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Students with disabilities at Virginia State University have the right to:**

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, activities, facilities and jobs offered by the University.
- Equal opportunity to work, learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Confidentiality of information regarding their disability as laws apply.
- To receive assistance from the Students with Disabilities Program office in removing physical, academic and attitudinal barriers.
- Information available in accessible formats.

### **Students with disabilities at Virginia State University have the responsibility to:**

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for the programs, courses, services, activities, facilities, jobs;
- Self-disclose and provide documentation from a qualified professional about how their disability substantially limits participation in courses, programs, and services.
- Initiate requests for accommodations by providing an accommodation request form to faculty.
- Adhere to the policies and procedures in the Students with Disabilities Program Student Handbook.

### **Virginia State University has the right to:**

- Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, and standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities and to evaluate students on this basis.
- Request and receive current documentation from a qualified professional that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services if the documentation does not demonstrate that the request is warranted, or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation.
- Select among equally effective accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.

- Refuse to provide an accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid and service that would impose a fundamental alteration on a program or activity of the university.

### **Virginia State University has the responsibility to:**

- Evaluate students on the basis of their abilities, not their disabilities.
- Provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and /or auxiliary aids and services for students in courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities.
- Prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities.
- Reduce or eliminate physical, academic and attitudinal barriers.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication, except where permitted or required by law.
- Assist the student in self-advocacy.
- Guide the student to possible resources that might assist him or her, whether it is on campus or networking in the community.
- Serve as liaison with faculty, when needed.
- Maintain academic standards by providing accommodations without compromising the content, quality, or level of instruction.

### **Complaint Procedure**

The University is committed to following the procedures for processing grievances as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Virginia State University, Policy #105, Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Policy is in place to support the enforcement and compliance of these procedures. Qualified students with disabilities who feel that they have been denied appropriate accommodations are encouraged to contact the Virginia State University's 504/ADA Coordinator, Office of Human Resources, P. O. Box 9412, Petersburg, Virginia 23806, (804) 524-5085. Upon notification of a discrimination complaint, the University shall take prompt and appropriate action for resolution. The use of informal means to resolve nondiscriminatory issues within the Students with Disabilities Program is encouraged.

## **STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **Disclosing a Disability**

Disclosing a disability to a professor can be a difficult task for students. The decision is up to the student. Students should know that disclosing the disability may make the professor slightly uncomfortable at first if he or she is unfamiliar with disabilities in general. A face-to-face meeting; however, is a good opportunity to educate the professor and make him or her feel at ease.

### **Tips for Students**

- Schedule a meeting as early as possible, preferably before the start of the semester. This allows time to work out accommodations and answer any questions.
- Do not go into complete detail about the disability, but tell the professor about the limitations it causes and how it may affect studying and classroom work.
- Explain any weaknesses caused by the disability. The student should also tell the professor his or her strengths.
- Be willing to offer some of the information from the Students with Disabilities Program.
- Rely on past experiences. Tell the professor what has worked before. For example, if the student has an auditory disability, let the professor know that writing instructions for assignments or tests on a blackboard will help, or if the student has a visual disability, extra large print handouts or overheads will be valuable.
- Ask the professor if he or she has any ideas. He or she may have worked with students with the same disability in previous classes to develop accommodations that worked.

- Discuss how student work will be evaluated. Clarify whether oral or written work will be evaluated, depending on the disability. Be clear about graduation criteria and the type of exam. Also, agree on out-of-class assignments and what is expected of the student.
- Reach an agreement that gives both parties a clear understanding of the accommodations that will be provided and the student's responsibilities.

Approaching Faculty Members (Disability Compliance for Higher Education, August 2001)

## **ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES**

### **The First Day Of Class**

- Arrive early to secure the best possible seating. Sit up front, close to the instructor. This will help you with concentration and minimize distractions.
- If you use special equipment, arrive early so the instructor can work with you, without taking up class time.
- Make sure you receive a class syllabus from each of your classes. Review your class syllabi and make sure you have the instructor's office number, phone number and office hours.
- If you use an interpreter or reader during class, you may need to save a seat for him or her.
- Organize each class syllabus, outline, notes and calendar in a notebook.
- If you have any questions or concerns, ask your professor and/or contact the SWDP immediately.

### **During the Semester**

- If you use interpreter services, inform the SWDP Coordinator of any changes in your schedule (i.e. if you drop or withdraw from a class).
- If you need special assistance during tests, make sure you inform the SWDP of your test needs at least one week prior to test time. This includes students who need readers, scribes, interpreters or request testing in the SWDP office.

- Make appointments to talk with your instructors to monitor your progress. It is beneficial to do this at least once before an exam and again shortly after the exam.
- If you think you will need tutorial assistance, request a tutor early in the semester, preferably the first week of the semester. Do not wait until your first test to seek these services. Make an appointment to meet with a tutor on a weekly basis.
- It is often difficult to begin working on a new assignment. Start by making a commitment of 30 minutes and then lengthen the study periods gradually.
- Use a computer program with spell check to identify misspelled words. Spell check cannot however, identify proper nouns, or homonym errors. In some software neither will grammatical errors, inappropriate prepositions, word choices or punctuation errors be spotted. Have your papers proofread by a writing tutor, friend, or relative who is willing to assist you in finding and correcting errors.
- Be aware of Add-Drop and Withdrawal dates. Use them to your advantage to enhance success. Do not continue in a class in which you have no chance of completing successfully. Remember, a grade of "C" average or higher is considered success completion in college.
- Schedule tutorial assistance early in the semester. Do not wait until you have failed a test before seeking a tutor.

### **The End of the Semester**

- Check the final exam schedule to make sure you know when and where your final exams are scheduled.
- Request support services, if needed, for your finals (i.e. reader, interpreter, scribe, testing room in the SWDP). Remember to request these services at least one week in advance.
- Talk with your instructors to discuss the final exam location and/or support services.
- Check with the SWDP to find out the priority registration schedule.
- Thank your instructors for their assistance.

## **Memory Strategies**

- Review your course material frequently and regularly throughout the semester.
- Color code, enlarge, underline and highlight your notes to strengthen your visual memory of course material.
- Read and copy your notes over as soon as you can, after class ends. Sometimes the act of writing facilitates memorization. Reading your notes can also clue you into information and concepts that you didn't understand during the lecture. These are things that you can clarify with your professor or tutor.
- Read your textbook, notes, and/or papers aloud (tape recording while you read). Often hearing information with or without seeing the words helps students remember what they have read.
- Tape record lectures and listen to them while driving, exercising, eating, grocery shopping, etc.
- Rehearse material to be mastered either orally or in writing. Write concepts out in full. Read your notes silently or aloud. Paraphrase or explain concepts to a friend or tutor.
- Review course material frequently and commit material to memory using strategies that aid recall such as listing, categorizing, visual imaging, revisualizing, alphabetizing, mnemonics and associations.

## **Ten Traps of Studying**

### **1. "I Don't Know Where to Begin"**

Take Control. Make a list of all the things you have to do. Break your workload down into manageable chunks. Prioritize! Schedule your time realistically. Don't skip classes near an exam -- you may miss a review session. Use that hour in between classes to review notes. Interrupt study time with planned study breaks. Begin studying early, with an hour or two per day, and slowly build as the exam approaches.

## **2. "I've Got So Much To Study . . . And So Little Time"**

Preview. Survey your syllabus, reading material, and notes. Identify the most important topics emphasized, and areas still not understood. Previewing saves time, especially with non-fiction reading, by helping you organize and focus in on the main topics. Adapt this method to your own style and study material, but remember previewing is not an effective substitute for reading.

## **3. "This Stuff Is So Dry, I Can't Even Stay Awake Reading It"**

Attack! Get actively involved with the text as you read. Ask yourself, "What is important to remember about this section?" Take notes or underline key concepts. Discuss the material with others in your class. Study together. Stay on the offensive, especially with material that you don't find interesting, rather than reading passively and missing important points.

## **4. "I Read It. I Understand It. But I Just Can't Get It To Sink In"**

Elaborate: We remember best the things that are most meaningful to us. As you are reading, try to elaborate upon new information with your own examples. Try to integrate what you're studying with what you already know. You will be able to remember new material better if you can link it to something that's already meaningful to you. Some techniques include:

Chunking: An effective way to simplify and make information more meaningful. For example, suppose you wanted to remember the colors in the visible spectrum (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet); you would have to memorize seven "chunks" of information in order. But if you take the first letter of each color, you can spell the name "Roy G. Biv", and reduce the information into three "chunks".

Mnemonics: Any memory-assisting technique that helps us to associate new information with something familiar. For example, to remember a formula or equation, we may use letters of the alphabet to represent certain numbers. Then we can change an abstract formula into a more meaningful word or phrase, so we'll be able to remember it better. Sound-alike associations can be very effective, too, especially while trying to learn a new language. The key is to create your own links, then you won't forget them.

## **5. "I Guess I Understand It"**

Test yourself. Make up questions about key sections in notes or reading. Keep in mind what the professor has stressed in the course. Examine the relationships between concepts and sections. Often, simply by changing section headings you can

generate many effective questions. For example, a section entitled "Bystander Apathy" might be changed into questions such as: "What is bystander apathy?" "What are the causes of bystander apathy?" and "What are some examples of bystander apathy?"

## **6. "There's Too Much To Remember"**

Organize. Information is recalled better if it is represented in an organized framework that will make retrieval more systematic. There are many techniques that can help you organize new information, including:

- Write chapter outlines or summaries; emphasize relationships between sections.
- Group information into categories or hierarchies, where possible.
- Information Mapping. Draw up a matrix to organize and interrelate material. For example, if you were trying to understand the causes of World War I, you could make a chart listing all the major countries involved across the top, and then list the important issues and events down the side. Next, in the boxes in between, you could describe the impact each issue had on each country to help you understand these complex historical developments.

## **7. "I Knew It A Minute Ago"**

Review. After reading a section, try to recall the information contained in it. Try answering the questions you made up for that section. If you cannot recall enough, re-read portions you had trouble remembering. The more time you spend studying, the more you tend to recall. Even after the point where information can be perfectly recalled, further study makes the material less likely to be forgotten entirely. In other words, you can't over study. However, how you organize and integrate new information is still more important than how much time you spend studying.

## **8. "But I Like To Study In Bed"**

Context. Recall is better when study context (physical location, as well as mental, emotional, and physical state) are similar to the test context. The greater the similarity between the study setting and the test setting, the greater the likelihood that material studied will be recalled during the test.

## **9. "Cramming Before A Test Helps Keep It Fresh In My Mind"**

Spacing: Start studying now. Keep studying as you go along. Begin with an hour or two a day about one week before the exam, and then increase study time as the exam approaches. Recall increases as study time gets spread out over time.



## **10. "I'm Gonna Stay Up All Night 'til I Get This"**

Avoid Mental Exhaustion. Take short breaks often when studying. Before a test, have a rested mind. When you take a study break, and just before you go to sleep at night, don't think about academics. Relax and unwind, mentally and physically. Otherwise, your break won't refresh you and you'll find yourself lying awake at night. It's more important than ever to take care of yourself before an exam! Eat well, sleep, and get enough exercise.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who is eligible to receive services from the Students with Disabilities Program (SWDP)?**

In order to determine if you are eligible, please contact the SWDP office to set up a meeting and to discuss your disability needs. You may be required to provide documentation of your disability to the SWDP Coordinator.

### **Will the services that VSU provides to students with disabilities cost me anything?**

The Students with Disabilities Program (SWDP) provides services to qualified VSU students with disabilities at **no cost**.

### **Who will know about my disability?**

Disability documentation is considered confidential information and does not become part of a student's academic transcript. All disability information is housed in the SWDP office. Disability documentation shall be released only in accordance with the law, and VSU policies and procedures. Student's grades, transcripts and other academic information are also confidential and shall be released only in accordance with the law, and VSU policies and procedures. Faculty and staff have no authority to see disability documentation or have any information concerning a student's disability without a legitimate educational need to know. It is the students' responsibility to supply any agencies or individuals who may be sponsoring them with copies of their grade reports and/or any other academic information.

### **What is the Students with Disabilities Program policy on attendance for students with disabilities?**

The Students with Disabilities Program does not determine course attendance policies at VSU. University departments or faculty are responsible for setting attendance policies as well as policies on make-up work and missed quizzes and exams.

## **APPENDIX**

### **RESOURCES FOR DISABILITY SERVICES**

#### **Disability Etiquette Handbook**

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/civilrights/documents/Etiquetteguide-final.pdf>

#### **Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic**

<http://www.rfbd.org/>

#### **Accommodations for the People with Psychiatric Disabilities**

<http://www.bu.edu/cpr/reasaccom/>

#### **The American with Disabilities Document Act**

<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/links/adalinks.htm>

#### **The HEATH Resource Center**

<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/>

#### **Beyond Affliction: The Disability Project**

<http://www.npr.org/programs/disability/>

#### **The Learning Toolbox**

<http://etv.jmu.edu/LearningToolbox/index.html>

#### **The Dartmouth Academic Skills Center**

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/>

#### **Learning Strategies Database**

<http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/database.html>

#### **George Mason University HANDBOOK OF SERVICES**

<http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/>

#### **ADA & IT Information Center for the Mid-Atlantic Region**

Provides free technical assistance and information, and low cost training on the Americans with Disabilities Act and accessible information technology.

Publications include *HR Tips* disability specific suggestions to accommodate customers and an *existing facilities checklist*. V/TTY 800-949-4232,

<http://www.adainfo.org>

Email: [adainfo@transcen.org](mailto:adainfo@transcen.org)

### **Virginia Relay Service**

Connects you to people who are deaf, deaf-blind, hearing, and hard of hearing and speech disabled. Toll free: V/TTY 711 (a special access number)

### **Department of Rehabilitative Services**

Assists persons with disabilities with employment and vocational assessment services.

Voice (804) 662-7000 or (800) 552-5019 TTY (800) 464-9950  
FAX (804) 662-9531 Email: [DRS@DRS.state.va.us](mailto:DRS@DRS.state.va.us)  
<http://www.vadrs.org>

### **Department for the Visually Handicapped**

Provides a range of services to children and adults who are blind or have low vision.

V/TTY (804) 371-3140 or (800) 662-2155

### **Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

Provides information, referral and advocacy issues pertaining to deaf or hard of hearing persons. V/TTY (804) 662-9502 or (800) 552-7917

### **Virginia Assistive Technology System**

Assists persons with disabilities in accessing assistive technology devices and services.

V/TTY (804) 662-9990 or (800) 552-5019 (In-State) FAX (804) 662-9478  
Email: [KnorrKH@drs.state.va.us](mailto:KnorrKH@drs.state.va.us) <http://www.vats.org>

### **Client Assistance Program**

Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy  
Information, referral and advocacy for people accessing rehabilitation and independent living services.

V/TTY (804) 225-2042 or in-state toll free (800) 552-3962  
FAX (804) 225-3221 Email: [generalvopa@dsa.state.va.us](mailto:generalvopa@dsa.state.va.us)  
<http://www.vopa.state.va.us>

### **Statewide Independent Living Council**

Provides information and referral to local centers for independent living that assist people with disabilities with transportation, housing, personal assistance services and other needs. Voice (804) 897-7228

FAX (804) 897-1080

D/HH: Virginia Relay #711

Email: [VirginiaSILC@comcast.net](mailto:VirginiaSILC@comcast.net)

<http://www.vasilc.org>

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**

EEOC provides information, technical assistance and publications on the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This agency is also responsible for enforcing Title I of the law. Call the toll-free number listed below to reach your local EEOC field office. Phone: (800) 669-4000 TTY: (800) 669-

6820 <http://www.eeoc.gov>

### **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**

West Virginia University

P.O. Box 6080

Morgantown, West Virginia 26506-6080

(800) ADA-WORK (V/TTY) or (800) 232-9675 (V/TTY) FAX: (304) 293-5407

JAN is a toll-free information and referral service on job accommodations for people with disabilities; on the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and on resources for technical assistance, funding, education and services related to the employment of people with disabilities. In addition, JAN analyzes trends and statistical data related to the technical assistance it provides.

<http://www.jan.wvu.edu>

### **President's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities (PCEPD)**

The President's Committee is a small federal agency whose Chairman and Vice Chairs are appointed by the President.

1331 F Street, NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20004 Phone: 202-376-6200

TTY: 202-376-6205

FAX: 202-376-6219

Email: [info@pcepd.gov](mailto:info@pcepd.gov)

<http://www50.pcepd.gov/pcepd>

### **Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs)**

Call the toll-free number below for information, materials, technical assistance, or training on the ADA. This number will automatically route your call to the DBTAC in your region.

(800) 949-4232 (V/TTY)

<http://www.adata.org/dbtac.htm>

### **The Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation**

Boston University  
940 Commonwealth Avenue West  
Boston, MA 02215

<http://www.bu.edu/sarpsych/jobschool>

The Center hosts an interactive and informative website for people with psychiatric conditions and addresses issues and reasonable accommodations related to work and school. This is the only site designed exclusively to provide information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other employment and education issues for people with psychiatric disabilities.

### **Learning Disabilities Council**

P.O. Box 8451  
Richmond, Virginia 23226  
(804) 748-5012

Information provided in this publication is funded by the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research (NIDRR), U.S. Department of Education but does not constitute an endorsement or legal guidance by the ADA Information Center or NIDRR. For legal advice concerning the ADA, seek an attorney.

### **Disclaimer:**

The Students with Disabilities Program cannot attest to the accuracy of information provided by linked sites. Linking to a website does not constitute an endorsement of the information provided on the site. SWDP will attempt to update all links; however, we cannot guarantee that all are accurate.

## **Glossary of Disability Terms**

**Assessment** - a collecting and bringing together of information about a person's needs, which may include social, psychological, and educational evaluations used to determine services; a process using observation, testing, and test analysis to determine an individual's strengths and weaknesses in order to plan his or her educational services.

**Accessible** - describes a site, building, facility or portion thereof that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines/ADAAG. Also refers to programs and services that are available to and useable by persons with disabilities and/or ways of making programs and services usable by persons with disabilities. This means providing access to, participation in or participation in the benefits of the programs and services.

**Physical Accessibility** - refers to what is commonly thought of as accessibility. Facilities that people with disabilities can enter independently and use the building without assistance. Physical accessibility refers not only to wheelchair access, but also to access for people with sensory, cognitive and health related disabilities.

**Programmatic Accessibility** - refers to making adjustments in the ways services are provided in order to level the playing field and allow all people an equal opportunity to participate.

**Electronic Accessibility** - refers not only to computers and adaptive software and hardware; it also means technological solutions to other issues of accessibility.

**Accommodation** - describes making programs, services and facilities accessible to and useable by people with disabilities. To accommodate a person with a disability may mean making a modification in the regular program, adapting service delivery, and/or removing barriers in a facility. Accommodation allows separated programs when necessary to ensure equal opportunity; however, individuals with disabilities cannot be excluded from the regular program for which accommodations may be necessary nor can they be required to accept separate or special services or benefits.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** - refers to civil rights legislation enacted in 1990 as Public Law 101-336, 104 Stat. 327 (42 U.S.C. 12101). This act makes it illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities in employment, public services, public accommodations; transportation and services operated by private entities to take pro-active steps to ensure equal access to goods, services and facilities.

**A *handicapped (disabled) person*** - is a "person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities only as a result of the attitude of others toward such impairment."

**Auxiliary Aids** - "devices or services that compensate for a disabling condition." The term includes qualified interpreters or other means of communications for hearing impaired people; qualified readers, taped texts or other devices for sight-impaired people; adaptive equipment; and other similar services and actions.

**A *qualified handicapped (disabled) person*** - is a "person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admissions or participation in the educational program or activity.

**Blind** - a condition in which a person has no usable sight, not to be confused with low vision, a condition in which a person has some sight.

**Cerebral Palsy** -a disorder of the central nervous system which affects muscle movement.

**Cognitive** - a term that describes the process people use for remembering, reasoning, understanding, and using judgment; in special education terms, a cognitive disability refer to difficulty in learning.

**Deaf** - a condition in which a person has no usable hearing, not to be confused with hard of hearing.

**Diagnosis** - the problem identified after an evaluation.

**Disability** - a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such impairment.

**Dyscalculia** - a learning disability in which a person is unable to do math problems.

**Dysfluency** -a break in the smooth flow of speech, stuttering.

**Dysgraphia** - a learning disability which impairs a person's ability to write.

**Dyslexia** - learning disability which impairs a person's reading ability.

**Language Impairment** - difficulty understanding and/or using language.



**Learning Disability** - a person with average or above average potential has difficulty learning in one or more areas (such as reading or math) and exhibits a severe discrepancy between their ability and achievement.

**Legally Blind** - a visual field which is not greater than 20 degrees or visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction.

**Low Vision** - impaired vision but individual is able to read print with or without magnification devices.

**“Major life Activities”** - means functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working and experiencing.

**Mental Disability** - a disabling developmental or neurological condition that has adverse effects on an individual’s cognitive or volitional functions—e.g., central nervous system disorders, head injuries, and specific learning disabilities.

**Multiple Sclerosis** - degeneration of the central nervous system due to a progressive deterioration of the protective sheath surrounding the nerves.

**Physical Disability** - any physical condition, anatomic loss/dysfunction, or disfiguration caused by bodily injury, birth defect, or illness.

**Psychological Disability** - any persistent psychological or psychiatric disorder or emotional or mental illness resulting in impairment of educational, or social, or vocational functioning—stress disorders, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, depression and personality disorders.

**Specific learning disability** - means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of mental retardation; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

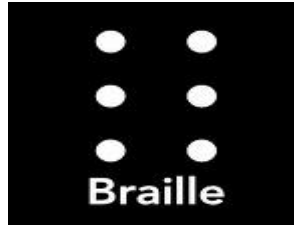
**Traumatic brain injury** – means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Impairments may result in difficulties relating to cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning; abstract, motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions; information processing and speech. The term does not apply to

injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

**Visual impairment including blindness** - means an impairment in vision that even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.



AUDIO  
DESCRIPTIO



BRAILLE



ASSISTIVE  
LISTENING  
SYSTEMS



ACCESS  
FOR THE  
BLIND



ACCESSIBILITY



SIGN  
LANGUAGE



TELEPHONE  
TYPEWRITER



VOLUME CONTROL TELEPHONE

**University Counseling Center  
Students with Disabilities Program  
Memorial Hall, Room 409**

**Lee Street**

**Petersburg, Virginia 23806**

**Voice: (804) 524-5061**

**TTY: (804) 524-5838**

**FAX: (804) 524-5978**

**E-mail: [www.vsu.edu/students/staff.htm](http://www.vsu.edu/students/staff.htm)**