Disability Services

Student Handbook

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**This handbook is only for non-law students. **
If you are a law school student seeking disability services please call, 415-442-7867.
MISSION STATEMENT

Golden Gate University seeks to ensure that its programs and services are fully accessible to students with disabilities.

OPERATING STATEMENT

The Disability Services Program tailors its services to the needs of the individual student in order to provide equal access to educational degree programs offered by the University. Program policies and procedures are designed to provide students with as much independence as possible, preserve confidentiality, promote student responsibility and empowerment, and enable students and faculty to develop individualized solutions to educational obstacles.

Students must self-identify themselves as a person with a disability in order to receive services. Information given by students will not be disclosed to any GGU personnel or outside agency without the student’s written consent.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Student Rights**

Equal access to programs, services, and facilities;
Confidentiality as prescribed by State and Federal law;
Information available in an accessible format;
Fair and judicial treatment, including due process of review.

**Student Responsibilities**

Following policies and procedures to obtain and use services;
Requesting services in a timely manner;
Reporting unsuccessful/unutilized accommodations;
Following all Golden Gate University policies.
SECTION 504 & AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (1990)

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

“Qualified persons with disabilities must have access to all federally supported programs and activities and may not be denied participation due to a disability.”

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990

The ADA enforces Section 504 with legal mandate against disability discrimination and extends law to areas not covered under 504. This act extends protection into the private and public sectors regardless of whether they receive federal financial assistance.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 mandates equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in all public facilities, programs, activities, services and benefits derived from them. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended mandate equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities in all programs, activities and services of recipients of federal financial assistance. Both ADA and Section 504 are civil rights statutes which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, obligate colleges and universities to make certain adjustments and accommodations and offer to persons with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully in all institutional programs and activities.

Section 504 states "a handicapped person is anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially impairs or restricts one or more major life activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working."

For federally assisted programs or activities operated by post-secondary education recipients, the specific obligations with regard to handicapped students include but are not limited to the following:

- All programs and activities must be offered in the most integrated setting appropriate
- Academic requirements must be modified, on a case by case basis, to afford qualified handicapped students and applicants an equal educational opportunity.
- A recipient may not impose upon handicapped students rules that have the effect of limiting their participation in the recipient's education program-or activity; for example, prohibiting tape recorders in classrooms or guide dogs in campus buildings.
- Students with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills must be provided auxiliary aids such as taped texts, interpreters, readers and classroom equipment adapted for persons with manual impairments.
DOCUMENTATION OF A DISABILITY

Documentation requirements vary for different disabilities. The Disability Services Office has developed the following requirements for documentation to be used for evaluating eligibility. If documentation does not meet the following requirements, the student may be asked for additional documentation. Students should direct questions about documentation guidelines to Disability Services at 415-442-6643.

Physical and Psychological Disabilities
(a) An appropriate agency or certified professional capable of diagnosing the disability in question should provide documentation. If the person signing the verification is not a certified professional, the documentation should state that it was based on a review of records prepared by an appropriate qualified professional or appropriate agency who performed the diagnosis.
(b) The documentation should be printed on agency, office, or company letterhead, listing the name, office address, and credentials of the qualified professional who performed the diagnosis, and/or the name of the appropriate agency.
(c) Documentation should include a diagnostic statement, which describes the current functional limitations caused by the disability. Currency of documentation is dependent upon:
   • the typical progression of the disability;
   • its interaction with development across the life span;
   • the presence or absence of significant events since the date of evaluation which may have altered the impact of the disability on the student’s educational process;
   • the current context for accommodations.
(d) If applicable, a description of treatments, medications, assistive devices/services in current use, and the estimated effectiveness in ameliorating the impact of the disability. Significant side effects that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance should also be noted.
(e) A description of the expected progression or stability of the impact of the disability over time should be included. This will provide a relevant timeframe for reevaluation of the student’s needs. Expenses incurred in reevaluation are the student’s responsibility.
(f) Academic accommodations recommended, i.e.; additional time, auxiliary aids, etc.

Learning Disabilities: Initial documentation will be reviewed by the Disability Services Coordinator. Because criteria for eligibility may differ between institutions, especially between community colleges and four-year institutions, a learning disability specialist may be consulted to review documentation in support of accommodations for a learning disability. GGU will select and pay the expense of the specialist for the purpose of

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determining eligibility if needed. If documentation is partial, out-dated, or unsupportive of the request for accommodation, the student will be asked to obtain further documents or new test results. All expense for appropriate documentation is the responsibility of the student. Learning disability eligibility guidelines are listed below.

(a) Qualified Evaluator: The documentation should list the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator. The evaluator should have the professional training to make a diagnosis regarding the specific learning disability. For example, the Association of Higher Education and Disability generally considers the following professionals who have additional training and experience in the assessment of learning problems to be considered qualified: clinical or educational psychologists, school psychologists, neuropsychologists, learning disabilities specialists, medical doctors, and some other professionals. Documentation should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

(b) Currency of Documentation: Documentation diagnosing a learning disability must be less than three years old. Exceptions may be made to this requirement based upon the learning disability consultant’s review of out-dated documentation.

(c) Substantiation of Learning Disability: Documentation should include a comprehensive assessment battery. The resulting diagnostic report should include a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, information processing and a diagnosis.

(d) Rationale for Accommodation: Specific evidence to establish a rationale supporting the need for accommodation and recommended accommodations.

Temporary Disabilities
Even though the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 does not cover students with temporary disabilities, Golden Gate University will accommodate students with temporary disabilities.

Students with Temporary Disabilities should follow the physical and psychological disability documentation guidelines. Students with temporary disabilities should have the appropriate agency or certified professional note the time frame for reevaluation of the student’s needs.
DEFINITION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations are not only provided on a case-by-case basis, they are also provided on a class-by-class basis. An accommodation which is reasonable in one class may not be reasonable in another. No accommodation will be provided if it compromises or alters essential elements or evaluation standards of a course.

Accommodations and services are considered to be classroom supplements. They are not intended to replace regular classroom participation or attendance. Also, accommodations are not a guarantee of a certain grade or of success in a particular class; rather, they are for the purposes of providing equal access to an education for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are expected to fulfill all academic and course requirements and evaluation standards, as expected of all students.

Accommodations are not provided retroactively. Disability Services is unable to provide accommodations for academic work completed before the student is verified as eligible for accommodations or before the student requests accommodations.
CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Student disability files are confidential and are not part of the student’s educational record (as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)). Information about a student’s disability is not shared with anyone without the student’s consent.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Policy

To ensure that all programs and services are fully accessible to students who have special needs, Golden Gate University's Disability Services program provides that students can quickly and equitably resolve complaints internally through the Disability Services Appeals Process. The Committee on Students with Disabilities will make decisions in the appeals process based upon legal decisions concerning Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and supporting evidence provided by the student and the university. Supporting evidence includes: documents provided by the University or by the student; decisions made by Golden Gate University's Learning Disability Consultant and the Disability Services Coordinator; and the stated educational objectives of courses, programs and activities.

Filing

Students may file an appeal through the Disability Services Appeals Process to resolve one of the following:

- Eligibility decisions made by the Disability Services Coordinator for students seeking accommodations for physical, psychological or temporary disabilities,
- Eligibility decisions made by the Learning Disability Consultant,
- Decisions made by the Disability Services Coordinator to determine appropriateness of academic accommodations,
- Decisions made by the Disability Services Office to deny services to a student for abuse of services provided by Disability Services.

Students wishing to file a discrimination complaint based on their disability status, regarding actions, or decisions (excluding those above) against students, staff and faculty of Golden Gate University should file a complaint through the Student Code of Conduct. Students filing a complaint on the basis of discrimination should not file an appeal through the Disability Services Appeals Process.

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Appeal and Grievance Procedure

1. Informal Review (Informal Appeal)

Because Golden Gate grants accommodations on an individual basis, students are encouraged to work closely with the Disability Services Office throughout their involvement with the program. Thus, students are encouraged to work with the Disability Services Coordinator to resolve their complaint or dispute before they file a formal appeal. To begin the informal review process, students should contact the Disability Services Office at the following address and telephone number:

Disability Services
536 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: 415-442-6643

2. Formal Appeals Process

- Students must file the Disability Services Appeal Form with the Disability Services Office at the San Francisco Campus within 30 working days of the action in question.
- Students should also submit a typewritten explanation with the grievance form—this includes any further supporting documentation.
- When submitted, the Appeal Form, the letter from the student, and any supporting documents, will be forwarded to the committee members within one working day. The members of the Committee will then render a decision in writing within 7 working days from the date when the appeal was filed with the Disability Services Coordinator.
- The committee will convene only when a student files an appeal.
- In the formal appeals process, the committee may:
  1. affirm, reverse, or modify a decision of the Disability Services Office, the Disability Services Coordinator, or Golden Gate University's Learning Disabilities Specialist;
  2. request further documentation from the student or from the Disability Services Office before decision is rendered;
  3. or, recommend that the student file a discrimination complaint.
- Decisions made by the Committee on Students with Disabilities are final, unless otherwise stated by the Committee.

Students dissatisfied with the appeals process or the decision of the committee may file a discrimination complaint with the United States - Office of Civil Rights (180 days to file).

Note: If students are denied an accommodation on the basis of poor documentation or inconclusive documentation, students will be reevaluated upon receipt of new documentation that may alter the current decision or finding of the Committee.
INTAKE AND REGISTRATION

Students must request accommodations and services in a timely manner in order to allow adequate time for processing requests. It may take several weeks for service providers to be recruited and assigned. To receive services in a timely manner it is imperative that we receive the request as soon as possible. Students requesting accommodations must also notify their instructor(s) in a timely manner.

If a student believes he/she would benefit from an accommodation not previously approved, the student must meet with the disability services staff to discuss further. The student may be asked to submit additional documentation which supports the new request.

NEW STUDENTS REGISTERING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Student must submit:

a. Request for Verification of Disability or adequate documentation (as defined in this handbook) that has been completed by his/her physician, medical or mental health professional, or learning specialist.

b. Authorization to Receive or Release Information form

c. Request for Accommodations. (See below for more instructions)

CONTINUING STUDENTS REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Student must submit a Request for Accommodations at least 15 days prior to the term. *If the Request for Accommodation form is submitted late, it is not guaranteed that the accommodation letters will be available at the start of the term.* It will take approximately 10 days to process the letter.

2. Once the student submits all the required documents, he/she will receive an Accommodation Letter. It is the student’s responsibility to present the letter to his/her instructor. Students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor about the accommodations.

3. If the student is taking classes via Cyber, Cybcampus is automatically informed of your accommodations. (We will not disclose any information about your disability.) However, it is still your responsibility to present the letter to your instructor.

4. **If you are a Cyber student you must make your testing arrangements/ proctoring by contacting cybcampus@ggu.edu**

5. If you are in need of testing accommodations that cannot be accommodated in the classroom, you may make a request to have your exam proctored in the Office of Students Affairs or at an agreed upon location by sending an email to gguds@ggu.edu. This request should be submitted no later than 15 days prior to the exam.

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