

# **Receiving SDRC Services:**

## **A Guide for Students**

**STUDENT DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER  
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Dear Students,

This guide is intended to acquaint students with the Student Disability Resource Center (**SDRC**). You may be a freshman, overwhelmed by all the changes in your life, or just learning that you have a disabling condition. In either circumstance, all of the new information can be difficult to understand and remember. This guide is intended to make your transition easier and to provide you with written information to help you understand how to use the SDRC to your best advantage.

We hope this guide is helpful. **Please remember that you can call our office at any time to clarify something you do not understand.**

We look forward to helping each of you achieve your academic best!

Sincerely,

Wayne Akins  
Director

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# ACCOMMODATION LETTERS

## New Accommodation Letters

Accommodation Letters are done during your first visit to the SDRC. We call this first visit an **intake** because we gather information about you and put you on our database. This first meeting is very important and requires that you call and schedule an appointment. This meeting is your first step in setting up the accommodations that will follow you during your stay at Georgia Southern.

Accommodation Letters are our way of communicating your accommodation needs to faculty members. These letters contain information about your disability and explain the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Your letter is drafted during your first visit to the SDRC.

Each Accommodation Letter packet contains information explaining test proctoring and also contains an Academic Accommodation Contract form that your professor will sign. *After the contract is signed, you must bring it back to the SDRC-* you are not eligible to receive accommodations until this is done.

## Taking Accommodation Letters to Professors

Students with disabilities need to be able to **self-advocate**. This means that you must be able to explain your disability and the accommodations you need. The SDRC **does not** deliver your Accommodation Letters to professors. We have you do that so that you can develop self-advocacy skills.

Students have the right to be accommodated, but making the request to be accommodated should be done with courtesy toward faculty members. **Never just drop the Accommodation Letter on a professor's desk and ask him/her to sign the agreement!** Instead, see your professor after class, request a time to see them in their office, and explain that you need to discuss your accommodations. Show up on time for your appointment. Go over your Accommodation Letter with them and discuss how accommodations on exams will be provided.

Professors might have questions about your disability. If questions become too personal, or you don't know the answers to their questions, simply tell them that. You may also invite them to contact the SDRC for answers to their questions.

When you finish discussing accommodations, have the professor sign the last page of the packet. It is the Academic Accommodation Contract, and it is green. **It is the student's responsibility to return this form to the SDRC.** You are not eligible to receive accommodations until this is done.

It is rare for a student to have problems with professors in this process, but problems can arise and sometimes for good reasons. Should this happen to you, come immediately to the SDRC and discuss the problems with the Director of the SDRC.

### Renewing Accommodations

**You must get updated letters done each semester.** Accommodation Letters should be renewed during the first two weeks of each semester. You will need a letter for each class for which you wish to be accommodated. To renew your accommodations, simply call the SDRC and tell us how many letters you need. You can pick up your Accommodation Letters the next business day.

### Deciding Where You are Accommodated

A critical part of setting up accommodations is the determination of where accommodations will take place. Professors may choose to accommodate you, or they may send you to the SDRC to take your exams. While you may state your preference, the final decision is up to the professor.

## AMAC

Students with visual processing deficits, visual acuity disabilities and other conditions affecting reading may be eligible to receive their textbooks in electronic format – allowing them to listen to written information.

The Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC) provides qualified students with the latest in adaptive technology. By registering with AMAC you will receive your textbooks in electronic format and receive three reading software programs.

To register for AMAC, call the SDRC and schedule an appointment with the Assistant Director.

The SDRC will continue to maintain other adaptive technology programs (such as Kurzweil) at the Center for individuals needing that service. We maintain two (2) scan and read stations and three(3) read-only stations at the GSU Henderson Library, which can be accessed after-hours.

## COMPLAINTS

### Faculty Members

Georgia Southern is fortunate to have excellent professors who care about students. For this reason, it is rare for students to have complaints about accommodations. However, should a professor refuse to accommodate you or fail to accommodate you, this should be reported to the SDRC immediately.

The SDRC will investigate your complaint and report back to you on our findings. Do not wait until the end of the semester (when you receive your grades) to report complaints. If you do, there is little that can be done to resolve the problem. **Report problems immediately!**

### SDRC Staff

Again, complaints in this area are rare. However, if you ever feel you have not been properly served by the SDRC, you should complain immediately. Begin with the person you are complaining about. Try to resolve the problem with them. If you are not completely satisfied, ask to speak with their supervisor.

## **EARLY REGISTRATION**

SDRC students are allowed to register one full week ahead of all other students. If done properly, Early Registration prevents many academic problems from occurring. Because this is one of the most effective services provided by the SDRC, students should participate in Early Registration every semester.

Our students receive multiple e-mail messages via their student e-mail account, announcing Early Registration dates and explaining how to prepare for Early Registration.

Check your student e-mail account weekly and pay careful attention to all e-mails from the SDRC.

If you receive **AMAC, notetakers, sign language interpreters**, or if you require **accessible classrooms**, you **MUST participate in Early Registration**. If you **fail to do this**, we **cannot guarantee** that you will be **properly accommodated**. In all likelihood, you will experience a serious delay in services.

### **Deadlines**

Each early registration session has a deadline, after which we will not be able to assist you with this service. If you fail to meet the deadline, you will not be able to participate in Early Registration.

## **NEWSLETTER**

You will receive a SDRC Newsletter at the beginning of every semester. You will receive the SDRC Newsletter via your student e-mail account.

The SDRC Newsletter will give you information about important dates, remind you of things you need to do, and keep you aware of SDRC changes. Please check your student e-mail account regularly to assure you receive our Newsletter and other important notices.

## **NOTETAKERS**

Students who have poor listening comprehension skills and poor writing skills may be eligible for notetakers. Students with physical disabilities may also be eligible for notetakers. Eligibility for this accommodation will be determined when your documentation is reviewed.

As soon as we determine that you are eligible for notetakers, you will be given an appointment with the SDRC Assistant Director who will explain this process to you.

The process for receiving notetakers must be repeated at the beginning of each term. To renew this service, students must also schedule an appointment with the Assistant Director.

Since this process can take varying amounts of time to accomplish, students should be prepared to tape record lecture until notetakers are put in place.

## **Sign Language Interpreters**

Sign Language Interpreters are provided to students who are deaf.

Because this is a difficult service to provide - there are very few interpreters in this area and most are employed full time – the SDRC requires all students who need this service to participate in Early Registration.

Students requiring this service who do not participate in Early Registration lose their right to receive this accommodation because of their failure to provide adequate notice of need. While the SDRC will make a good faith effort to locate an interpreter, the odds of this being successfully accomplished are radically diminished by the lack of notice/need issue.

## **REGENTS EXAM**

The Regents Exam is a basic skills test (reading and writing) test. If you are served by the SDRC, you are eligible for accommodations on all parts of the exam.

You will be notified through your Georgia Southern email when you have been registered for the exam, and the deadline for requesting accommodations with the SDRC. You are required to take the exam your first semester enrolled. If you fail to pass the exam by your third attempt, you will have to take additional classes. **You cannot receive your diploma without passing the Regents Exam.**

When you receive an email from the SDRC, call and talk with the test proctoring coordinator at the SDRC to set up accommodations for the exam and schedule your exam time.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTS**

These tests include GRE, GMAT, GACE, LSAT, MAT among others. As soon as you know you plan to further your degree, call and talk with the test proctoring coordinator at the SDRC to set up accommodations for the exam. Accommodation requests for these tests can take up to eight weeks.

## **STUDENT TEACHING/CLINICAL PRACTICUMS**

Education majors served by the SDRC will eventually be involved in field experiences. Those students should be sure to work with the SDRC prior to their placement to set up accommodations for this experience.

This is a wonderful opportunity to develop coping skills that will follow you through your teaching career. We strongly urge all Education majors to take advantage of accommodations while in clinical settings including student teaching.

Accommodations for field experiences require input from professors and clinical supervisors. Because it can take time to gather information from multiple sources, planning for accommodations in these settings must be started six months in advance.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

The SDRC has a range of adaptive equipment designed to assist students with disabling conditions. We have voice-activated word processors, scanners for reading, enlargement capability, and other items designed for students with different types of disabilities.

Many of these devices will require a commitment of your time so that you can learn how to use them. Since most disabilities are life-long, this is an excellent way to develop skills that will assist you here and in your profession. We encourage all students to see what equipment we have available and learn how to use it. If we do not have equipment that meets your needs, please let us know immediately.

You must make an appointment with the Assistant Director to use this equipment.

## **TEST PROCTORING**

Many times we ask professors to make accommodations that they do not have the resources to provide. Additional time, a quiet room, and a word processor are examples of accommodations that professors have difficulty providing. When this happens, professors may choose to send you to the SDRC to take your exams.

You should assist your professors in making this decision during your appointment to deliver your Accommodation Letter (see page 4).

### **Test Proctoring Requirements:**

- **Meet** with your professors as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations
- **Discuss** with your professors where and when you will take your exams. Professors may choose to accommodate you, or they may send you to the SDRC to take your exams. While you may state your preference, the final decision is up to the professor.
- **Remind** your professors about your accommodations when the exam is **first announced**; most prefer you send them an email; give them at least **two days notice** to send your exam to the SDRC
- **Schedule** your exams at the SDRC at least **24 hours** in advance of the exam; this means before 5:00 pm the day before the test; messages left on voice mail after 5:00 pm will not be considered 24 hours notice; **final exams** must be scheduled at least **one week** before the first day of finals; tests must be taken at the same time/day as the class unless other arrangements have been made with the professor at least 24 hours in advance of the exam
- **Show up** on time to take the exam; your time to complete the exams begins at the scheduled time - if you are late, that time will be deducted from the time you're allowed for the exam; if you are more than 30 minutes late, you will not be allowed to take the exam until/unless we receive written permission from the professor

- **Study in advance**; appointment time is test time; do not arrive at the SDRC at test time expecting to study; you will not be allowed to do so
- **Cell phones** must be turned off upon entering the testing lab; you will not be allowed to use cell phones in the lab

It is your responsibility to make sure your testing accommodations are in place. Your professors have the option to provide adequate accommodations; taking your tests at the SDRC is left to the professor's discretion. If students work with professors, the test proctoring process is not a problem. However, if students expect professors to make all the arrangements, this can become a very troublesome process.

**We encourage you to take this seriously and do your part. Failure to follow these procedures will be cause for referral to the SDRC Director and may result in loss of testing privileges at the SDRC. Academic dishonesty will result in an automatic referral to Judicial Affairs.**

### Test Proctoring Form

**A Test Proctoring Form must be completed by the professor and accompany each test that comes to the SDRC.** This form is available on the SDRC website. Using this form, your professor will explain how your test will be returned to him/her, and give special instructions for the exam.

### Final Exams

Since the SDRC has only a limited number of testing rooms available, students must schedule final exams as early as possible. **You will receive multiple notices via your student e-mail account advising you of the deadline.** Final exams must be scheduled at least one week before the first day of finals. It is a good idea to schedule them as soon as you know the date; it is usually on your syllabus.

**If you miss the deadline, you will not take your final exam at the SDRC.**

Tests must be taken at the same time/day as the class unless other arrangements have been made with the professor at least 24 hours in advance of the exam.

## **TIME MANAGEMENT**

One of the best skills all students can develop is the ability to manage their time effectively. This is especially critical for students with disabilities who must study longer and harder than their classmates. The SDRC offers training in this area for students. Our focus is to help you develop a schedule and provide you with skills designed to help you maintain that schedule.

We start by having you purchase a good calendar. (The best calendars have “full page days” that run from about 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.). We then assist you in plugging your classes into this calendar. The next step is showing you how to add study times, breaks, and leisure time into your week.

If you are interested in developing your skills in this area, contact the SDRC for an appointment.

## **REGULAR APPOINTMENTS**

All SDRC students are encouraged to visit with an SDRC staff member on a regular basis. This is especially important for new students. During your visit, we will discuss what has happened since your last visit and what you have coming up. We will use this information to refer you for services and assistance within the SDRC and other resources on campus.

Students who take advantage of this service usually do much better academically and have fewer problems with accommodations than students we seldom see.