



Shepherd University

Office of Accessibility Services Handbook

**The First Step to
Success is Access!**



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Our Purpose

Accessibility Services provides equal access for students with differences in abilities as they transition into college. Accessibility Services issues reasonable accommodations to students and assists them with other services to promote student success.

Our Mission

Our mission at the Office of Accessibility Services is to assist students with diverse needs to achieve their academic and social potential by facilitating the use of reasonable and documented accommodations. We are committed to the best learning environment for every student. The Office of Accessibility Services provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its amendments. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to reach out to the Office of Accessibility Services with any questions.

Mandates

Shepherd University seeks to empower students with disabilities to achieve their academic and personal goals. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and its subsequent amendments, Shepherd University is committed to fulfilling its ethical and legal responsibilities to ensure equal opportunity for all students. In addition, the University prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual on the basis of disability.

A person with a disability is defined as any individual who has: A physical or mental impairment; a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment, and the impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities such as self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, or learning.

Disabilities may be physical, cognitive, or sensory, and may or may not be easily noticed. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Mobility Related Disabilities
- Visual Related Disabilities
- Hearing Related Disabilities
- Medical Conditions
- Mental Health Diagnoses
- Learning Disabilities

Non-Discrimination Policy

Shepherd University is committed to developing and implementing appropriate strategies to achieve greater awareness, appreciation, and human understanding, both in the classroom and throughout the campus. We promote a campus culture that celebrates multiculturalism and diversity. We demonstrate this commitment through our acceptance and appreciation of all groups and individuals. We commend those individuals on our campus who practice civility daily by actively supporting and fostering differences at Shepherd University. The full Non-Discrimination Policy can be found on the [Shepherd University website](#).

Rights and Responsibilities

Students with disabilities at Shepherd University have the right to:

Equal access to curricular and co-curricular programs across campus, including academic courses, student services, employment, and student activities; reasonable and appropriate accommodations; information available in a timely manner and in an accessible format; expect all disability-related information will be treated confidentially by all University employees, and appeal any disability-related accommodation decision.

Students with disabilities must act as self-advocates.

In order to obtain disability-related accommodations, students are responsible for completing all necessary forms and providing all requested documentation to the appropriate disability service provider.

All accommodations will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Please note that the University has an obligation to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to all campus programs, services, and functions.

Schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions have a responsibility to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students, including students with disabilities. This responsibility is based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), which are enforced by the Offices for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice. Section 504 covers all schools, school districts, and colleges and universities receiving federal funds.

Title II covers all state and local entities, including school districts and public institutions of higher education, whether or not they receive federal funds. Disability harassment is a form of discrimination prohibited by Section 504 and Title II. Both Section 504 and Title II provide parents and students with grievance procedures and due process remedies at the local level. Students are also covered under the West Virginia White Cane Law which may provide additional, separate protections. Individuals and organizations also may file complaints with OCR.

Shepherd University has the right to:

- Identify and establish essential skills, knowledge, and standards for courses, programs, services, and activities, as well as evaluate students with disabilities on this basis.
- Confirm disability status, as well as request and receive current, relevant documentation that supports requests for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids and services if the documentation does not demonstrate that the request is warranted or if the student fails to provide appropriate accommodations.
- Select among equally effective and reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Refuse unreasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services, that impose a fundamental alteration on a program or activity of the university or place an undue financial burden on the university.

Shepherd University has the responsibility to:

- Inform applicants and students regarding the availability of accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.

- Provide information to students with disabilities in accessible formats upon request.
- Ensure that courses, programs, services, and activities when viewed in their entirety, are available and usable in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
- Evaluate students on the basis of their abilities and not their disabilities.
- Respond to requests in a timely manner.
- Provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality as outlined by the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

Application Process

Students with disabilities may be eligible for services and reasonable accommodations at Shepherd University. In order to request Academic or Housing Accommodations, students must:

1. Complete the [Accommodation Application](#): This can be found linked on the Accessibility Services website and directly from the [Accommodate](#) webpage.
2. [Include Supporting Documentation](#): Supporting Documentation can be included digitally on the Accommodation Request Form or delivered to the Accessibility Services Office in Gardiner Hall, Lower Level, G-13, Monday through Friday (8:00 AM – 4:30 PM). More information on what constitutes appropriate supporting documentation can be found in the *Documentation Requirements* section of this handbook.

Emotional Support Animal

An Emotional Support Animal (ESA), as defined by the Fair Housing Act (FHA), may provide a person: emotional support, calming, stability, and other kinds of support in a housing environment. Permission to have an ESA on campus allows for students with disabilities an equal opportunity to engage in residential life and be successful on Shepherd University's campus. Under FHA, there must be an identifiable relationship between the student's disability and the assistance or support the ESA provides in a residential setting.

Once a student has been approved for an ESA, they are then considered to be an owner. To become an owner, in addition to the Accommodation Request Form and

Supporting Documentation, students applying for an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) must also:

- Submit the [Emotional Support Animal Policy – Owner Form](#): This can be found on the Accessibility Services Website.
- Submit the [Emotional Support Animal Roommate Agreement](#): This form should be completed by the roommates and/or suitemates of the student requesting the ESA accommodation.
- [Submit the Veterinarian Information Form](#): This form should be completed by the animal's veterinarian and given to the Office of Accessibility Services.

Documentation Requirements

Sources of information used for determining a disability and/or accommodation may include a student's self-report, direct observation and interaction with the student, and/or documentation from qualified evaluators or professionals.

Student Self-Report:

Students should complete the Accommodation Request Form, which provides students an opportunity to describe their disability and the accommodations they are hoping to receive. Students may supplement request with any additional information, if needed. Students may consider including information about their experiences related to their disability, barriers faced, and/or previous accommodations. ***Parents may not request accommodations and/or services on behalf of their student. The student must request services and accommodations.*** It's important to note that, because the academic accommodations are provided for students, the process for requesting and providing academic accommodations requires the active participation of the student. Accessibility Services needs to have open communication directly with the student to assess the needs and wishes of the student who is requesting the accommodation. For this reason, our policies and procedures require the student's involvement.

Documentation:

Disability related documentation should provide information on the impact of the disability so that appropriate accommodations can be identified. Documentation may include assessments, reports, and/or letters from qualified evaluators, professionals,

or institutions. Common sources of documentation are health care providers, psychologists, diagnosticians, and/or information from a previous school (e.g., accommodation agreements/letters, 504, IEP, or other documents).

Documentation should be current, within 5 years of the accommodation request. Documentation for a physical or sensory disability of a permanent or unchanging nature need not fall into this time frame.

Suggested Documentation Elements:

1. Typed on letterhead, dated, and signed by a qualified professional.
2. State the disability or disabilities with a general description of the basis for determination of the stated disability
3. Describe the impact or symptoms of the disability.
4. If appropriate, discuss the severity and/or expected progression.
5. If appropriate, list medication side-effects.
6. Current and/or past accommodations.
7. Any recommended accommodations.

Please note: if any of the suggested elements are missing, it may adversely impact the review of the accommodation request.

How to Obtain Documentation:

The professional making the diagnosis of a disability should be an appropriately trained evaluator, such as a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, or educational diagnostician. For example, an audiologist would diagnose a hearing impairment; a psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker would diagnose a mental health disability. Documentation from a family member or family friend is not acceptable.

When and How to Submit Documentation:

Accessibility Services will consider all relevant information provided. Documentation will be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Please submit your information at least 2-3 weeks prior to the date that services are requested.

Supporting Documentation may be submitted in the Accommodation Request Form as an attachment or may be sent electronically to the Accessibility Services email or delivered to the Accessibility Services office.

If you have any questions about these documentation guidelines, please contact Accessibility Services at accessibility@shepherd.edu or 304-876-5122.

Reasonable Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines reasonable accommodations as the provision of services, such as, but not limited to: interpreters, note-takers, extended time on examinations, architectural access, program modifications, or other adjustments, which accommodate for the limitations presented by a documented disability. Participants must be otherwise qualified for the program in which they are enrolled.

Neither Section 504, nor the ADA, requires Universities to lower their academic standards or substantially alter the essential elements of their courses or programs to accommodate students with disabilities. The requirement to provide reasonable accommodations is designed to afford an equal opportunity for students with disabilities. Achieving reasonable accommodations for a student with a disability involves shared responsibility among students, faculty, and staff.

Not all students require the same accommodations, even if they have the same disability. Reasonable accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis to address the individual needs of the student and the functional limitations addressed in the documentation.

Accommodate

Accommodate is a program that simplifies the accommodation and proctoring processes for students and faculty. Shepherd University will implement this new system for the fall 2022 semester. The link to Accommodate can be found [here](#), and we recommend that you bookmark this site so you can come back to it easily.

Your login information for Accommodate is your Shepherd University email and password. Tutorials on Accommodate topics can be found on the Accessibility Services website, under the [Accommodate](#) tab.

Accommodate for Students

Signing Your Accommodation Letter

Once your accommodations have been approved, you will receive an email stating that you need to login to Accommodate and sign your accommodations letter. This to verify you understand which accommodations you have been approved for and the accompanying rights and responsibilities.

Semester Request

At the beginning of each semester, you will need to complete a Semester Request to implement your accommodations. Once you complete a Semester Request, your accommodations letter will automatically be sent to your professors through Accommodate. *Should you add/drop a class, you will need to complete a new semester request.*

Supplemental Accommodation Requests

Supplemental Accommodation Requests are made when a student already has accommodations with the Accessibility Services Office, but requires additional or adjusted accommodations. Complete the Supplemental Accommodation Request on Accommodate!

Testing Accommodations

The Office of Accessibility Services offers exam proctoring services for students who receive testing accommodations.

Should a student want to request these services, students must complete the test room booking form on Accommodate *5 days in advance of their testing date*. Should a student attempt to complete the request in less than 5 days, Accommodate will show no availability. Directions on how to complete a test room booking form can be found on the [Accommodate](#) page of the AS website.

Once a student completes their test room booking form, they must notify their professors so faculty can complete their portion of the form.

Students should report to the testing site at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled time. If a student wishes to cancel their test room book request, they can do so 24 hours before the testing date via Accommodate. Should a student miss a scheduled testing session, make-up sessions cannot be scheduled without the expressed permission of the professor.

Notification Process

Once the appropriate forms and documentation have been submitted, each student will be notified through Shepherd University email of the specific accommodations that have been approved, or in some cases, denied.

When a student's accommodations have been approved, they must sign their accommodation letter. This is to verify their understanding of which accommodations have been provided and the accompanying responsibilities. Instructions on how to do this can be found on the Accommodate Page

Students will also need to complete a Semester Request at the beginning of each semester. This will notify professors of the student's intentions to utilize their accommodations for that course.

Once a Semester Request has been completed, The Office of Accessibility Services recommends that students meet with their professors to discuss their accommodations.

For Housing Related Accommodations, the Office of Accessibility Services will notify Residence Life Staff of the approved accommodation. This includes housing accommodations, meal plan accommodations, and Emotional Support Animal accommodations.

Other Important Information

Accommodations Provide Equal Access

The purpose of an accommodation is to ensure equal access to students with documented disabilities, promoting access, not success. Accommodations are not intended to reduce academic requirements or alter the standards by which academic performance is assessed, but instead allows for equal access for students with disabilities. Accommodations do not change what a student learns, but how they learn, meaning that students with disabilities are required to learn the same content at the same proficiency as students who do not have accommodations.

Changes in or Difficulty Accessing Accommodations

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Office of Accessibility Services as soon as possible regarding any difficulties with accessing the accommodation or if revisions to an accommodation need to be made. The Accessibility Services staff is here to support students in the accommodation process. Students have the opportunity to complete a Supplemental Accommodation Request, which is available when a student already has accommodations with the Accessibility Services office, but requires additional or adjusted accommodations. This can be completed on Accommodate.

Student Responsibilities:

- Apply for accommodations as soon as possible and provide supplemental documentation promptly
- Sign their accommodation letter
- Complete a Semester Request to use their accommodations at the beginning of each semester
- Meet with their professors to discuss their accommodations
- Complete the test room booking form through Accommodate and notify professors 5 days in advance of testing date

Professors Responsibilities

- Sign students' accommodation letters when received
- Implementing student accommodations
- Complete the faculty portion of the test room booking form through Accommodate 3 days in advance of the testing date.

Professors will begin to provide accommodations from the time they receive the student's accommodation letter. Accommodations are not retroactive, and professors are only required to provide accommodations once they have been notified of the student's accommodation letter. Professors are not expected to modify or waive the essential requirements of a course or program.

Extended Time on Assignments Accommodation

This accommodation is granted to students with a disability that impacts their ability to complete assignments at the scheduled time. More information on this accommodation can be found in the [Extended Time on Assignment Guidelines](#).

Handicap Parking Stickers

All vehicles are required to obtain and properly display a parking decal for the current academic year in order to park on the Shepherd University campus. Those with a DMV issued handicap license plate or hangtag may park in any handicap parking space on campus unless specified as F/S only. Current Shepherd University Parking Decal is also required in order to park on campus. Anyone seeking a temporary handicap decal needs to go through his/her personal physician and state DMV.

For more information, please go to the [SUPD website](#).

Requesting Textbooks in an Alternate Format

The Office of Accessibility Services utilizes BookShare, a service that provides alternative formats for textbooks.

If a student needs a textbook in an alternate format, we encourage students to go to the [BookShare website](#) (bookshare.org) and create a free account to browse the available textbooks on their website.

Accessibility Services staff are here to assist students in this process if needed. Please contact Accessibility Services to see if your textbook can be downloaded through Bookshare. This process can take 5-7 business days depending on the book.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Shepherd University is committed to a student's right to privacy and confidentiality. Student files are kept separate from academic files and are stored in a secure location within the Accessibility Services office. Information contained in a student's record is confidential and protected as an educational record under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Accessibility Services will not provide a student's information to parties outside of the university without the student's express written consent, which can be granted when the student fills out the [Authorization to Release Information Form](#). This form can be found on the Accessibility Services website.

Even with permission from the student, student information is shared on a limited, need to know basis, at the discretion of the Accessibility Services Coordinator.

Glossary

Accessible Classroom: This accommodation ensures an accessible classroom for the student. For example, if a student used a mobility aid, the classroom would be accessible by ramp/lift/elevator.

Accommodate: The portal for requesting accommodations, proctoring services for students and faculty, checking out equipment, communicating with the Accessibility Services office, and much more. The [Accommodate](#) homepage will be accessible with your Shepherd University login credentials. We recommend that you favorite or bookmark the homepage for easier access in the future!

Alternative Testing Format: This accommodation provides students with an alternative format for their tests.

Assistive Technology: This accommodation provides students with technology to assist them in their classes. For example, a student may be provided with an EchoPen, which is able to record audio while a student writes their notes.

Braille: This accommodation provides students with braille versions of class material.

Emotional Support Animal: An umbrella term that includes comfort/therapy/support animals. An Emotional Support Animal is an animal that fosters emotional or other support that provides relief for one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. More information on Emotional Support Animals can be found on the Accessibility Services [Animal Guidelines](#) Page.

Enlarged Print: This accommodation allows students to be provided with larger printed versions of class materials.

Extended Test Taking Time: This accommodation provides students with additional time to take quizzes and exams.

Functional Limitations: The inability to perform an action or set of actions, either physical or mental, because of a physical, cognitive, or emotional restriction.

Intermittent Attendance: This accommodation allows for leniency in a professor's attendance policy due to a student's disability. More information on this accommodation can be found in the [Intermittent Attendance Guidelines](#).

Major Life Functions: Activities of daily living, such as self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, concentrating, and working. Also included are operations of major bodily functions, such as functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestion, bladder and bowel functions, neurological and brain functions, and respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

Permission to Record Class Lectures: This accommodation allows students to record their lectures to be reviewed later.

Person With a Disability: Any individual who has a physical or mental impairment; a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment, and the impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities such as self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, or learning.

Pets: Any animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. [The Student Code of Conduct](#), Section 6000, prohibits pets (with the exception of fish in a 30 gallon or smaller tank) in residence halls.

Preferential Seating: This accommodation allows students preferential seating for their in-person classes.

Proctor Testing: Tests overseen by a proctor who ensures the identity of the test taker and of the test taking environment.

Reduced Distraction Environment for Testing: This accommodation provides students a quiet environment to take their tests, which can be done in the Accessibility Services Proctoring Office.

Service Animals: Dogs of any breed and any size, that are trained to perform a task directly related to a person's disability. The task or work a service animal has been trained to do must directly relate to the individual's disability. Examples include but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting people who are deaf or hard of hearing, assisting individuals during seizures, assisting with the retrieval of items, assistance with balance and stability, and preventing or interrupting behaviors. The function of providing comfort, emotional support, well-being, or companionship does not constitute "work or tasks" for the purpose of qualifying as a Service Animal. The term Service Animal includes dogs in training to be Service Animals when they are accompanied by a trainer and identified as a dog in training. More information on Service Animals can be found on the [ADA website](#).

Test Read Aloud: This accommodation provides students the opportunity to have their test be read aloud.

Use of a Calculator: This accommodation allows the student to use a calculator on their exam.

Accessibility Services Staff Information

Office Location	Gardiner Hall, Lower Level, G-13
Mailing Address	Accessibility Services P.O. Box 5000 Shepherdstown, WV 25443-5000
Phone Number	304-876-5122
Fax Number	304-876-5071
Email Address	accessibility@shepherd.edu
Operation Hours	Monday through Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Website	https://www.shepherd.edu/accessibility
Accessibility Services Coordinator	Jessica Anders 304-876-5338 janders@shepherd.edu
Support Specialist	Rebekah Turley 304-876-5067 rturley@shepherd.edu
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