

# **WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY HANDBOOK**

**2022-2023**



## **Disability Support Services Coordinators**

### **Wallace Campus**

Ryan Spry, Director of Student and Campus Services  
1141 Wallace Drive  
Dothan, Alabama 36303

#### **Physical Location:**

Cunningham Hall, Room 400  
Phone: 334-556-2587 or 1-800-543-2462, Ext.  
2587 Fax: 334-556-2575  
TDD: 1-800-548-2546  
E-Mail: [rspry@wallace.edu](mailto:rspry@wallace.edu)

### **Sparks Campus**

Terri Ricks, Coordinator of Student Services  
Post Office Drawer 580  
Eufaula, Alabama 36072-0580  
Physical Location: Building A, Room 11  
Phone: 334-687-3543, Ext. 4270  
Fax: 334-556-2537  
E-Mail: [tricks@wallace.edu](mailto:tricks@wallace.edu)

## PREFACE

As an institution of higher education, and in the spirit of its policies of equal employment opportunity, Wallace Community College hereby declares its policy of equal educational opportunity. All applicants for admission will be considered without regard to race, color, religion, gender, ethnicity, age, or disability unrelated to program performance. Complaints or grievances of any student who has reason to think he or she has been affected by discrimination will be considered through established procedures.

Disability Support Services (DSS), located in **Room 116 of Grimsley Hall** on the Wallace Campus and Room 11 of the A Building on the Sparks Campus, serves as the central campus resource for students with disabilities. Working in partnership with students, faculty, and staff, the goal of DSS is to provide a physically and educationally accessible College environment that ensures that an individual is viewed on the basis of ability, not disability. Disability Support Services staff members work collaboratively with students and faculty to determine appropriate accommodations that will enable all students to have access to the same programs and services and to evaluate students' academic performance, to the extent possible, without the limiting effects of a disability.

*For brevity, the Wallace Campus address is used throughout this manual; however, each College location has Disability Support Services Coordinators available to its students and prospective students. For disability-related questions, contact either of the locations identified in the preceding section of this manual (Disability Support Services Coordinators).*

### **Important Note**

Information described in the *Wallace Community College Disability and Accessibility Handbook* is subject to change. Current copies of Disability Support Services policies and procedures are available from any DSS office and on the Student Services page of the Wallace Community College Web site at [www.wallace.edu](http://www.wallace.edu).

# Table of Contents

<b>SECTION 1</b>	
<b>Information for Prospective Students</b>	<b>1</b>
Registration with Disability Support Services	1
Admission	1
Financial Aid	1
SOAR	1
Student Life	2
Transfer Students	2
<b>SECTION 2</b>	
<b>Services for Students with Disabilities</b>	<b>3</b>
Disability Support Services	3
Mobility Orientation	4
Parking	4
Learning Resources Center Access and Assistance	4
Tutoring Services	4
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services	5
Temporary Injuries and/or Illness	5
<b>SECTION 3</b>	
<b>How Reasonable Accommodations are Determined</b>	<b>6</b>
Services of a Personal Nature	6
Accommodations and Services	6
The Accommodation Process	7
504/ADA Grievance Process for students	8
Differences between High School and College	9
<b>SECTION 4</b>	
<b>Verification of Disabilities</b>	<b>10</b>
Comprehensive Documentation	10
Rationale for Reasonable Accommodations	14
Confidentiality of Disability Verification Documents	15
<b>SECTION 5</b>	
<b>Disability Support Services Policies</b>	<b>16</b>
Audio Recording Policy	16
Class Absences of Students with Disabilities	16
Sign Language Interpreter Policy	17
Notetaker Announcement	18
Reader Services Policy	18
Exam Proctoring Policy	19
Animals on Campus	20
Review of Personal Records Policy	20
Calculator Policy	21
Memory Aid Policy	21
Release of Information Policy	24
<b>APPENDIX A – Application for Disability Support Services</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>APPENDIX B – Differences between High School and Postsecondary Accommodation Processes</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>APPENDIX C – Additional Documentation Required for Specific Diagnoses</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>APPENDIX D – Student Information Release Authorization Form</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>APPENDIX E – Testing Center Policies</b>	<b>30</b>

## **Information for Prospective Students**

The Disability Support Services staff welcomes you to Wallace Community College. The purpose of DSS is to facilitate reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations to college students with disabilities. The information in this section is designed to help you get started with the DSS office should you desire to request academic accommodations as a student at Wallace Community College.

### **Registration with Disability Support Services**

Registration with the DSS office is a separate process from applying for admission to Wallace Community College. Interested students should contact the DSS office at 334-556-2587 (voice), 800-548-2546 (TDD) or by mail at 1141 Wallace Drive, Dothan, Alabama 36303. No accommodations shall be provided until the student has registered and provided the appropriate documentation to the office of Disability Support Services.

### **Admission to the College**

The Admissions Office handles all applications for admission to the College. Admission standards are described in the *College Catalog and Student Handbook* and must be met by all students, regardless of disability. Disability information and documentation should not be submitted to the Admissions Office.

### **Financial Aid**

Wallace Community College's financial aid packages (e.g., federal aid, work-study, grants, and scholarships) enable students from all socioeconomic backgrounds to attend the College. Financial aid is awarded annually, based on need and merit, and students who desire to receive aid must reapply each year.

### **SOAR**

SOAR (Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration) is conducted by the Division of Student Affairs. For more information on this specific event, please contact the College's Student Life Coordinator at 334-556-2477. Students who anticipate a need for accommodations during their SOAR session should contact the DSS office at 334-556-2587 and are encouraged to visit Disability Support Services staff during their SOAR session.

## Student Life

One of the goals of the DSS office is to assist students with developing self-advocacy skills by becoming an active member on campus. Accordingly, students with disabilities are encouraged to become actively involved with campus organizations. Information on campus organizations is available both in the *College Catalog/Student Handbook* and from the DSS staff.

## Transfer Students

To receive services from the DSS office, transfer students with disabilities must follow DSS registration procedures outlined in this Handbook. The following steps are recommended to transfer students for ensuring timely service:

### Requesting Disability Documentation

- Request that your disability verification be forwarded to the DSS office from the professional that diagnosed or assessed your disability. Typically you will have to sign a release of information before any documents are forwarded to the DSS office; **OR**
- Request that your disability verification be forwarded to the DSS office from the postsecondary institution that initially provided you with academic accommodations. Typically you will have to sign a release of information before any documents are forwarded to the DSS office.

### Requesting Verification of Academic Accommodations

- Request that the postsecondary institution which initially provided you with academic accommodations verify in writing the types of accommodations granted. Typically, you will have to sign a release of information before verification is forwarded to the DSS office.
- Discuss with an appropriate DSS staff member the types of accommodations and services you used at a prior postsecondary institution.

Transfer students with disabilities who have received accommodations at another postsecondary institution are not necessarily eligible for the same services at Wallace Community College.

## Services for Students with Disabilities

Wallace Community College is committed to serving college students with documented disabilities. All departments across campus are available to provide a broad array of services designed to meet the needs of college students with documented disabilities.

### Reminders

- Students with disabilities should remember that applying for accommodations through the Disability Support Services office is separate from gaining admission to the College.
- The DSS office also recommends that students do not submit disability documentation to the Admissions office. Admissions decisions are made without regard to disability status.

### Disability Support Services

Disability Support Services is the central contact point for students with disabilities. Services for students with disabilities focus on providing individualized accommodations, while promoting student responsibility and self-advocacy. The DSS office views the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities as a collaborative effort, requiring the cooperation of the faculty and staff, as well as students.

Students who choose not to self-identify when they enter Wallace Community College do not forfeit their right to receive accommodations at a later date. However, the College is not obligated to provide accommodations or services for students with disabilities until students apply for accommodations through the DSS office and have made known their need for accommodations **each academic term**.

After the student submits an Application for Disability Support Services (*Appendix A*) and initially meets with the appropriate campus DSS Coordinator to discuss potential accommodations, requests for accommodations for subsequent terms should be made by email to the appropriate campus DSS Coordinator before the start of the term.

Additionally, accommodations are not retroactive. In other words, students who submit a request for accommodations mid-semester are not eligible to have accommodations retroactively applied to assignments and/or examinations issued prior to the request for accommodations.

## **Mobility Orientation**

The DSS office provides mobility orientation to Wallace Community College for students who need and request mobility orientation. Students should contact the DSS office as early as possible to make arrangements for mobility orientation to their specific campus.

## **Parking**

Accessible parking areas are available to students who are certified for disability parking by their home state.

## **Learning Resources Center Access and Assistance**

### **Phillip J. Hamm and other Learning Resources Center Facilities**

Learning Resources Center (LRC) staff members may be contacted during business hours to ensure access to LRC collections and services. Special services include research assistance, telephone reference, retrieval of materials, photocopying assistance, LRC orientation, special checkout arrangements, and extended loan periods for reserved materials.

To contact the LRC, call 334-556-2217 (Wallace Campus) or 334-687-3543, Ext. 4203 (Sparks Campus).

## **Tutoring Services**

Although the DSS office does not offer tutoring services for students with disabilities, the staff strongly recommends taking advantage of one of the many academic assistance resources available through the College:

- The Math Lab and Writing Center are available on both campuses to assist with developmental math and English assignments. For more information, please visit the College's Web site.
- *Homework Alabama* connects Alabama students to free online homework assistance for some introductory level college courses (Math, English, sciences). Technical requirements and other information about this free service are available at the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) Web site.
- TRiO is a federally funded program that provides academic assistance to eligible students who qualify. Reading and study skills classes, academic counseling, tutoring, and assistance with financial aid applications are provided for eligible students. Students may inquire about TRiO at 334-556-2368 (Wallace Campus) or 334-687-3543, Ext. 4271 (Sparks Campus).



## **Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)**

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) exists to enable individuals with disabilities to reach their potential. The ADRS aims for the goal of independent living. The ADRS provides necessary vocational counseling and diagnostic, medical, educational, technological, and employment services to eligible individuals with disabilities to assist them with entering into employment. The ADRS does not provide comprehensive psychological services. For more information, contact the ADRS at 1-800-275-0132, Ext. 220; 1-800-441-7607; or 334-699-8600 (in Dothan). The Web address is <http://www.rehab.alabama.gov>.

## **Temporary Injuries and/or Illnesses**

Students with temporary injuries and/or illnesses are not eligible for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Examples include, but are not limited to, ankle sprains, colds, and the flu.

## **How Reasonable Accommodations Are Determined**

An academic accommodation is essentially a problem-solving process. The task is to determine the necessary adjustments that will enable students with disabilities to have access to the same programs and services available to students without disabilities and to have their academic performance evaluated without the limiting effects of their disability. The objective of such adjustments is to accommodate the functional limitations of the student's disability while maintaining the integrity of College courses and programs. Therefore, no accommodations will be issued that are deemed to fundamentally alter the nature of the course/program/exam/assignment.

Disability Support Services Coordinators determine reasonable academic adjustments for students, taking into consideration recommendations from the physician, psychologist, or other clinician that diagnosed the student's disability. DSS Coordinators also ascertain accommodations that previously have been used in educational settings with the student, and give consideration to student preferences for accommodations. In addition, DSS Coordinators consult with faculty members to assist with developing reasonable accommodations to match individual course requirements. DSS Coordinators meet individually with students to discuss accommodations. Although some individuals may have similar disabilities, each request for accommodation is considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Services of a Personal Nature**

Services of a personal nature are not considered reasonable accommodations in postsecondary education. Examples of personal services include, but are not limited to, tutoring, attendant care, transportation, and mobility.

### **Accommodations and Services**

DSS Coordinators recommend specific accommodations based on documentation received and individual class requirements. The following examples of common accommodation requests may not be appropriate in all situations. Furthermore, these examples are not an exhaustive listing of all possible accommodations that may be implemented in or out of the classroom setting.

**Testing Accommodations**—Testing accommodations may include extended time, reduced-distraction testing situations, audio-recorded or orally-administered tests, alternate test formats (e.g., paper exam in lieu of computer-based), readers, and/or scribes. Testing accommodations are to be provided by faculty within each department, if possible. Students should discuss testing accommodations with their instructors at the beginning of each term. The Testing Center staff proctors examinations for students who need to use assistive technology or whose instructor is unable to provide test proctoring. Students are obligated to comply with the Testing Center proctoring guidelines to ensure smooth delivery of services and to maintain the integrity of faculty examinations. Those guidelines are outlined within *Appendix E* of this Handbook.

**Alternate Formats for Assignments**—In some cases, assignments may be submitted in formats other than those stated in course requirements.

**Audio Recording and/or Notetakers**—Students may be permitted to audio record class lectures and/or may request peer notetakers. DSS offices will assist in providing NCR (No Carbon Required) paper for notetakers and/or arranging for peer note takers. Audio recorders may be provided by the DSS office. All loaned equipment must be returned at the end of each term.

**Academic Classroom Aids**—In some cases, students may be permitted to use calculators, word processors, spelling and grammar checkers, and adaptive equipment for manual impairments to complete in-class and out-of-class work and activities.

**Adaptive Computer Technology**—The College offers assistance with document readers and other adaptive computer technology.

**Academic Assistance**—Academic assistance may be provided through scribes, readers, and/or sign language interpreters; however, federal law does not require the College to provide services that place an undue administrative or financial burden on the College.

## The Accommodation Process

**Students are responsible for requesting accommodations each term.** After the student submits an Application for Disability Support Services (*Appendix A*) and initially meets with the appropriate campus DSS Coordinator to discuss potential accommodations, requests for accommodations for subsequent terms should be made by email to the appropriate campus DSS Coordinator. This correspondence should take place before the start of the term.

To initially request academic accommodations, students are required to complete a series of steps, preferably prior to the beginning of each term. Registered students may request accommodations at any point during the term; however, students who do not give sufficient notice of accommodation requests are not guaranteed that optimal accommodations will be implemented. (Requests for interpreters must be made at least 6 weeks in advance). Students have an obligation to inform Wallace Community College in a timely manner of accommodation requests.

**Student obligations regarding the initial accommodation process are as follows:**

1. Meet with the campus DSS Coordinator to discuss accommodation requests.
2. Complete an Application for Disability Support Services (*Appendix A*) and return with proper documentation, as outlined in Section 4 of this manual.

**Once the campus DSS Coordinator 1) reviews the application and supporting documentation OR 2) each subsequent semester, receives an email request from the student for the continuation of accommodations:**

1. The DSS office will email accommodation letters to the student's faculty members at the beginning of each term (if the accommodation request occurs before the start of the term) or upon receipt of the request for accommodations (if the accommodation request comes after the start of the term).
2. Students should notify their faculty that they are to receive accommodations and to check their email for specific details.
3. Students should discuss with the instructor of the course how accommodations will be implemented. The DSS Coordinator will be available to offer suggestions to the student and faculty member if needed.
4. If receiving testing accommodations, students should remind the instructor of the exam accommodation at least one week before scheduled exams.
5. Students should report any problems with accommodation implementation to the DSS Coordinator.

Also, accommodations are not retroactive. In other words, faculty members are not obligated to accommodate prior exams, assignments, or any course-related activity that occurred prior to being sent an accommodation letter from the DSS office.

## **504/ADA Grievance Process for Students**

Students are entitled to appeal accommodation decisions of DSS Coordinators, faculty members, or other Wallace Community College entities. Questions and concerns regarding accommodations and services for students with disabilities should be directed initially to the DSS Coordinator. If the DSS Coordinator cannot provide information or suggestions that resolve issues involving disability rights issues, a meeting with the student, the faculty member (if applicable), DSS Coordinator and the Dean, Student Affairs and Sparks Campus is the second step in resolving disagreements.

If an agreement concerning disability rights is not reached at this point, the final step in the grievance process involves the dissenting party filing a formal grievance. During the grievance process, the student is entitled to receive accommodations recommended by the DSS office.

The process for filing an official grievance is located in the *Wallace Community College Catalog and Student Handbook*.

Should you disagree with the outcome of the grievance process, you may file a formal complaint with the Office for Civil Rights:

Regional Office for Civil Rights  
Office for Civil Rights, Region IV  
U.S. Department of Education  
Atlanta, Georgia 30301-3104

## **Differences between High School and College**

An important issue for potential and current college students with disabilities is to understand the differences between the application of disability rights laws in secondary and postsecondary institutions. The most basic distinction between services for students with disabilities in high school and college is that secondary settings are geared towards the least restrictive setting, whereas postsecondary institutions are obligated to provide access. In other words, more responsibility is placed on student initiative in higher education.

A student's responsibilities dramatically increase as he/she moves from secondary to postsecondary education. *Appendix B* illustrates differences between secondary and postsecondary obligations of students with accommodation requests.

## Verification of Disabilities

Students with disabilities who are seeking services from Wallace Community College are required to submit documentation to Disability Support Services in order to verify their eligibility for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The documentation must specify a major life activity (such as walking, eating, writing, or learning) that has been substantially limited by a disability.

The following guidelines for documentation correspond with federal guidelines and Wallace Community College policies and have been extracted from the Association on Higher Education and Disability's (AHEAD) website:

<https://www.ahead.org/professional-resources/accommodations>

These guidelines are designed to ensure that documentation of disabilities is appropriate to verify eligibility and to support requests for accommodations.

Additional documentation that may be required for specific diagnoses may be found within *Appendix C* of this handbook.

## Comprehensive Documentation

In sum, comprehensive documentation must verify the nature and extent of the disability in accordance with current professional standards and techniques, and it must clearly address the need for all of the student's specific accommodation requests. Documentation should support the need for services based on the individual's current level of functioning in the educational setting, as well as address the limitations of the disability within an academic context. Students requesting accommodations for the manifestations of multiple disabilities must provide evidence of all such conditions. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and legible.

Specific accommodations are required when *necessary* to enable the student to access his or her education. (*Cf. PGA Tour v. Martin*, 532 U.S. 661 (2001)). It is not uncommon for evaluators to recommend a range of accommodations and services for a particular student. The postsecondary provider will need to sort through these recommendations with the student to determine what

accommodations are indeed necessary, to avoid giving the student an unfair advantage over his or her classmates or promoting accommodations that could substantially modify a program's standards.

A comprehensive assessment battery and the resulting diagnostic report should include background information (e.g., interview, review of records), assessment of areas appropriate for the specific impairment, and a specific diagnosis. School plans such as an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a Summary of Performance (SOP), or a Section 504 Plan are useful but may not, in and of themselves, be sufficient documentation to establish the rationale for accommodations. Such plans may be included as part of a more comprehensive assessment battery and should be on clearly distinguishable district forms.

The diagnostic report should include more than test protocol sheets or a summation of individual report information. It should integrate the various views regarding a student's specific functioning abilities and the resulting impact of these abilities as they relate to postsecondary educational demands. In a public school, K-12 system, the IEP Team recommends the type of evaluations necessary for the educational programming of a student and provides a statement of eligibility for special education services. Such a multidisciplinary approach to evaluation may result in multiple reports or documents. A comprehensive SOP *might* include such a synthesis of relevant test data and functional performance information; but as noted previously, an SOP might not provide adequate documentation in and of itself.

A postsecondary institution has the discretion to require additional documentation if it is determined that the existing documentation is incomplete or inadequate to ascertain the existence of a disability or the need for accommodations. With a student's written permission, a telephone consultation with an evaluator to update or clarify information regarding the disability may be sufficient to complete the existing documentation. Any cost incurred in obtaining additional documentation when the original records are inadequate for postsecondary purposes is borne by the student. If the existing documentation is complete, but the postsecondary institution desires a second professional opinion, the postsecondary institution bears the cost.

Comprehensive disability documentation should include the following six components. It is important to note that some reports may be comprehensive in some components and less so in others. Professional judgment is important in determining if a specific component is adequate. This may depend on the nature of the disability and the type(s) of services and accommodations being requested:

1. Evidence of existing impairment and impacts of diagnosis within the postsecondary setting;
2. Background information (e.g., interview, review of records);
3. Relevant testing;
4. Specific diagnosis;
5. Rule-out of alternative diagnoses or explanations; and
6. Integrated summary.

### **1. Evidence of Existing Impairment**

Statement of Presenting Problem(s): A statement of the individual's presenting problem(s) should be provided, including evidence of ongoing difficulties and behaviors that significantly impact functioning in the postsecondary setting.

### **2. Background Information**

Background information should be culled from a variety of sources (e.g., interview, review of records) and, whenever feasible, should consist of more than self-reporting. Information from third party sources is often invaluable.

The diagnostician, using professional judgment as to which areas are relevant, should review pertinent records and conduct an interview, which may include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- History of presenting problem(s)/symptom(s);
- Any significant developmental, medical, psychosocial, and employment histories;
- Family history (including primary language of the home and the student's current level of English fluency);
- Review of pertinent academic history of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education;
- Review of prior evaluation reports;
- Description of current functional limitations pertaining to an educational setting that are considered to be a direct result of the presenting problems; and
- Relevant history of prior treatment, therapy, interventions, or accommodations with a discussion of how such interventions were effective in mitigating the functional limitations.

### **3. Relevant Testing**

Assessment, and any resulting diagnosis, should consist of and be based on a comprehensive assessment battery that does not rely on any one test or subtest. Neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessment is important in determining the current impact of the impairment on the individual's ability to function in academically-related settings. The evaluator should objectively review and include relevant background information to support the diagnosis in the evaluation report.

Standard scores should be provided for all normed measures, including all subtests administered. Grade equivalents and/or percentiles are not useful unless standard scores are also included. The tests used should be technically sound (e.g., statistically reliable, valid) and standardized for use with an adolescent/adult population. The test findings should document both the nature and severity of the disability. A profile of the particular student's strengths and weaknesses must relate to functional limitations that may warrant accommodations.

Interpretation of results is required. Test scores, subtest scores, or test protocol sheets alone are not sufficient and should not be used as a sole measure for the diagnostic decision. For example, in *Bartlett v. New York State Board of Law Examiners* (970 F. Supp. 1094 (S.D.N.Y.); 1997 U.S. Dist. Lexis 12227 (S.D.N.Y.)), the court made it clear that clinical judgment is critical to the



diagnosis of learning disabilities; scores alone can form neither the basis of a diagnosis nor a denial of accommodation under the ADA or Section 504 (Simon, 1997). Selected subtest scores from measures of intellectual ability, memory functions tests, attention or tracking tests, or continuous performance tests do not, in and of themselves, establish the presence or absence of a specific disability. Informal inventories, surveys and direct observation by a qualified professional may be used in tandem with formal tests (i.e., standardized and norm- or criterion-referenced tests) to further develop a clinical hypothesis. All data must logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning or another major life activity for which the individual is requesting the accommodation.

#### **4. Specific Diagnosis**

The report must include a specific diagnosis of the condition by a qualified evaluator. It is important to rule out alternative explanations for problems such as emotional, attentional, or motivational issues that may be interfering with a major life activity but do not constitute a specific disability. If the data indicate that a specific disorder is not present, the evaluator should state that conclusion in the report. The evaluator is encouraged to use direct language in the diagnosis and documentation of a specific disorder, avoiding the use of terms such as "suggests" or "is indicative of." It is important to note that, according to AHEAD, "Test anxiety" alone is also not considered to qualify as a disability at the postsecondary level.

#### **5. Rule-Out of Alternative Diagnoses or Explanations**

The evaluator must investigate and discuss the possibility of dual or multiple diagnoses, where indicated, and alternative or co-existing conditions which may confound the specific diagnosis. This process should include exploration of possible alternative diagnoses as well as other factors impacting the individual, which may result in behaviors mimicking a specific disorder.

Because of the challenge of distinguishing normal behaviors and developmental patterns of adolescents and adults (e.g., procrastination, disorganization, distractibility, restlessness, boredom, academic underachievement or failure, low self-esteem, chronic tardiness, nonattendance) from clinically significant impairment, a multifaceted evaluation should address the intensity and frequency of the symptoms and whether these behaviors are considered to constitute a substantial limitation to a major life activity.

#### **6. Integrated Summary**

A well-written summary based on a comprehensive evaluation process is a necessary component of the report. Assessment instruments and the data they provide do not diagnose; rather, they provide important elements that must be interpreted and integrated by the evaluator with background information, observations of the student during the testing situation, and the current context. It is essential, therefore, that professional judgment be used in the development of a summary. The summary should include:

- Demonstration of the evaluator's having ruled out alternative explanations for the presenting problems;

- Indication of the substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity presented by the specific disorder and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the educational context for which accommodations are being requested;
- Indication of whether or not the student was evaluated while on medication and the nature of the response to the prescribed treatment; and
- Indication as to why specific accommodations are needed, how the effects of the specific disorder can be accommodated, and any record of prior accommodation or auxiliary aids.

## **Rationale for Recommended Accommodations**

Accommodation needs can change over time and are not always identified through the initial diagnostic process. The evaluator(s) should describe the impact, if any, of the diagnosed impairment on a specific major life activity. The diagnostic report should include specific recommendations for accommodations that are reasonable, with the understanding that the postsecondary institution is vested with the sole authority for determining what is reasonable. When possible, a detailed explanation should be provided as to why each accommodation is recommended and should be correlated with specific functional limitations determined through interview, observation, and/or testing. Although prior documentation may have been useful in determining appropriate services in the past, to further facilitate the process of requesting accommodations at the postsecondary level, current documentation should validate the need for services based on the individual's present level of functioning in the educational setting.

The documentation should include any record of prior accommodations or auxiliary aids, including information about specific conditions under which the accommodations were used (e.g., standardized testing, final exams, licensing or certification examinations) and whether these previous accommodations improved access to the targeted activity. A school plan such as an IEP, SOP or a Section 504 Plan may not be sufficient documentation, in and of itself, but if not, can be included as part of a more comprehensive evaluative report. Regardless of a prior history of accommodations, a current need must be demonstrated to warrant the provision of a similar accommodation. If no prior accommodations were provided, the qualified professional and/or the individual should include a detailed explanation as to why accommodations are necessary at the present time although none had been required in the past.

Reasonable accommodation(s) may help to ameliorate the disability. The determination for reasonable accommodation(s) rests with the Disability Support Services Coordinator working in collaboration with the individual with the disability. Because accommodations may vary based on course content and/or academic programs, faculty may be included in the determination process as well. If accommodations are not clearly identified in the provided documentation, DSS Coordinators may seek clarification and, if necessary, additional information.

It is the responsibility of a student who wishes to receive academic accommodations at the College to provide comprehensive and current documentation that meets the guidelines noted above.

## Confidentiality of Disability Verification Documents

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the use and dispersal of educational records containing personally identifiable information pertaining to students, including students with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Education has ruled that evaluative information pertaining to a student, including medical and psychological reports authored by third parties, constitute “educational records” governed by FERPA. (*University of North Alabama*, 104 LRP 58746 (FPCO 2004)). In general, information contained in such records may not be released absent consent of the student. However, there are a number of important exceptions that permit disclosure without such consent, including when a health and safety emergency exists or when disclosure to a “school official” is justified for educational reasons. See 34 C.F.R. §§99.31(a)(1) and (10).

Disability Support Services staff members are committed to ensuring that disability-related information is carefully safeguarded. Even when information contained in an educational record may be released, providers limit disclosure to information that is essential to meet the inquiry. For example, DSS staff members do not share actual copies of evaluations with faculty unless they may be serving on some committee where such documentation is necessary in carrying out the committee’s function (e.g., readmission committee).

Additionally, the DSS office will not release any written or verbal information about a registered student without expressed written consent of the student. This consent will come in the form of the Student Information Release Authorization form (*Appendix D*), which must be completed and returned to the Admissions Office on the Wallace Campus or Student Services Office on the Sparks Campus.

## **Disability Support Services Policies**

The following policies apply to Disability Support Services operations. Registered students should be familiar with those policies that apply to their particular requests. The DSS office may periodically change, alter, or modify policy.

### **Audio Recording Policy**

Students who are eligible to audio record class lectures must agree to the following terms for Disability Support Services to implement this accommodation:

- Students will not copy or share recordings from any of their classes with other students.
- Students will not copy or share these recordings with non-students.
- Students will not divulge the contents of recordings from any of their classes with agencies, representatives of organizations, the media, or any entity other than themselves.

Failure to abide by the audio recording policy may result in a charge of academic misconduct.

Following the term, students will erase recordings from all of their classes and return recorders to the DSS office. Failure to return these devices within the allotted time frame will result in a hold being put on the student's account.

### **Class Absences of Students with Disabilities**

Regarding a student whose disability is likely to result in absences from class or absences from examinations:

At the time that the DSS office sends the instructor an accommodation letter, the student should initiate with the instructor a discussion of attendance and make-up policies and procedures. The instructor should make his or her attendance policies clear so that the student can make informed choices about whether he or she will be able to meet the requirements of the course.

An instructor should announce attendance/makeup policies on the first day of class and include this same information on the course syllabus. If an instructor intends to disallow or restrict absences, the instructor might choose to use wording similar to this: "Your presence is fundamental

to meeting the objectives of this course. Consequently, you will be allowed (0, 1, 2....) excused absences and will be allowed to make up (0, 1, 2...) missed quizzes/exams.”

Should absences occur, the student has an obligation to maintain open lines of communication with his or her faculty, discussing the student’s situation, the student’s current level of success in meeting course requirements, and how the student can meet those requirements (if possible) during the remainder of the semester.

While the student and the instructor will likely be able to resolve any issues through their own discussions, DSS Coordinators will be available to both the student and the instructor for addressing any questions or concerns.

**Please note that the DSS Attendance Policy does not exempt the student from completing all requirements of the course within the specified timeframe; rather, it serves to make the faculty aware of potential absences that may be incurred by the student**

## **Sign Language Interpreter Policy**

### **The Goal of Disability Support Services in Interpreting Services**

The goal of Disability Support Services in the area of interpreting services is to facilitate the process of providing high quality interpreting services to deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing clients. The DSS office will serve in a mediator capacity to ensure that appropriate accommodations are provided to deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) students as mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### **Role of the Interpreter**

An interpreter is a professional communication facilitator between D/HH individuals and hearing individuals. The purpose of an interpreter is to provide a meaningful communication exchange equal to that of a hearing individual. The interpreter uses a specific sign language to communicate the spoken word to D/HH clients. Interpreters will use their voice to communicate sign language to hearing clients. Some D/HH individuals, however, prefer to voice for themselves. The interpreter is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the environment is appropriate and conducive for interpreting.

The interpreter is not a tutor, instructor, note-taker, or counselor and should not engage in these roles.

## **Requesting an Interpreter**

It is critical that D/HH students notify the DSS office of their communication needs and preferences as early as possible to ensure appropriate accommodations. As such, requests for interpreter services must be submitted 6 weeks prior to the beginning of the term.

Students should inform the DSS office when any changes are made in the class schedule (e.g., adding or dropping a class, room change, day/time change). This will allow DSS Coordinators the opportunity to coordinate interpreters appropriately.

Students who experience problems with interpreting services should attempt to address their concerns with the Interpreter and/or instructor. If no resolution can be reached, the student should contact the DSS office as soon as possible.

## **Notetaker Announcement**

Notetakers are provided to students who have a visible need for notetaker services or have documentation that substantiates a need for notetaker services. Course instructors will identify potential notetakers for eligible students.

Instructors will announce the need for a notetaker and try to identify someone who is suitable. If no student volunteers to serve in this capacity, the DSS Coordinator will reach out to the class and solicit assistance. Upon identifying a notetaker, the instructor will introduce the notetaker and student after the class is over in his or her office. The student with a disability should not be identified in the class, as confidentiality is essential. The eligible student is responsible for obtaining NCR notebooks from Disability Support Services and providing them to the notetaker. The DSS office is also available to facilitate this process if faculty feel uncomfortable soliciting a notetaker in front of the class.

## **Reader Services Policy**

Readers are offered to students who are eligible for reader services. Four weeks' prior notice is required for reader services. Typically, readers are secured for texts that are unavailable through the College's eBook vendor or are too difficult to scan. Reader services for exams are seldom used because students are able to access exam materials via assistive technology. The Disability Support Services office is not responsible for compensating unapproved readers.

## **Role of a Reader**

The purpose of a reader is to provide access to print materials. Readers are not available to offer interpretations or explanations for documents read. Students should consult their instructor for clarifications.

# **Exam Proctoring Policy**

## **Role of Exam Proctoring at Disability Support Services**

- Testing Center staff proctor exams for students who need to use assistive technology to access and respond to test content. Testing Center staff will also proctor exams for instructors who do not have the ability to conduct proctoring.
- Students who do not need assistive technology are required to attempt working out exam accommodation requests with their instructor. If an agreement is not achieved, Testing Center staff will then proctor the exam.

## **Rules of Exam Proctoring for Students**

- The DSS office is NOT responsible for ensuring that student exams are delivered to the office. It is the student's responsibility to ensure delivery of exams to the Testing Center.
- The DSS office cannot grant extensions for exam completion beyond requested accommodations. Students should consult with their instructor regarding extensions.
- Instructors have a right to establish exam parameters, such as the day and time students are to take exams. The DSS office will only ask for adjustments when a scheduled exam interferes with DSS operations.
- Students will not be allowed to leave the testing area for any reason once an exam has begun, unless such student is eligible for an accommodation that allows for movement or restroom breaks.
- Students are not allowed to take books, book bags, notes, or any class-related material into a testing area unless the student has expressed written permission from the instructor as indicated on the Test Proctoring Reservation notice.
- Students are not allowed to consult with tutors or office personnel about exam questions. To do so constitutes academic misconduct, unless a student has expressed written permission from the instructor as indicated on the Test Proctoring Reservation notice.
- Students will be served on a first-come-first-served basis, unless prior scheduling has been arranged.
- Students who are eligible for a reduced-distraction test environment will be given an opportunity to test in a private room if space is available. In some situations, more than one student will be taking exams during test time. Please remember that a reduced-distraction test environment is not defined as "private test room" or "distraction-free environment." Reduced distraction means fewer disruptions. No environment is 100% free of distractions.

- Specific Testing Center policies are outlined within *Appendix E* of this handbook. These policies must be read, signed, and returned to the Testing Center staff before testing accommodations will be implemented.

## **Animals on Campus**

### **Service Animals**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are permitted on the College campuses and in its facilities. A service animal means any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Such work or tasks may include, but are not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing, providing minimal rescue or protection work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. To be permitted on campus, a service animal must be specifically trained to perform a service function. Furthermore, the animal should wear a harness, cape, identification tag, or other gear that readily identifies its working status. Finally, students will need to be prepared to address 1) whether the service animal is required because of a disability and 2) what work or task the service animal has been trained to perform.

A service animal may be banned from campus if the animal continues to pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, is deemed out of control and the student fails to take appropriate action to remedy the situation, is not housebroken, or otherwise causes substantial property damage to the property of the institution or others. Additionally, students are financially responsible for any damages caused by their service animal.

### **Comfort /Emotional Support Animals**

Comfort/emotional support animals are not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and as such, are not permitted on the College campus and in its facilities.

## **Review of Personal Records Policy**

1. According to federal law as outlined by the Family Education and Privacy Act (FERPA), students have a right to review academic records.
2. Students that desire to see their file should make a request to the Disability Support Services office.
3. A request to review a file will be honored within 45 days, the period specified by FERPA. Typically, DSS Coordinators will be able to schedule a review session within 10 business days.
4. An appropriate DSS staff member will be present when a student reviews his or her file. Any questions regarding disability documentation will be answered to the best of the staff member's ability. Students are encouraged to contact the author of their disability documentation to discuss questions, comments, or concerns.



5. Students are not allowed to photocopy the contents of their file; however, students are allowed to make notations.

## Calculator Policy

The use of a calculator may be considered a reasonable accommodation when basic calculations (i.e., addition, subtraction, multiplication, and/or division) are not being tested. This is to include, but is not limited to, calculations involving integers and decimals. Furthermore, only a basic, 4-function calculator may be utilized as part of the accommodation process through the DSS office.

## Memory Aid Policy

A memory aid aims to cue a student's memory of complex multi-step terms, formulae, prerequisite knowledge or concepts that are not a part of common knowledge and would be difficult to recall in a timed setting. A memory aid *should not fundamentally alter course or exam requirements*, but rather support a student to demonstrate their knowledge of course material without taxing already compromised memory function. **The eligibility for memory aids as an accommodation is made by Disability Support Services personnel. The structure of the memory aid and whether individual components of it compromise the intent or integrity of the exam is made by the instructor.**

Memory aids provide help to students with documented deficits in rote memory, sequencing memory, working memory, and/or long-term memory to recall information that would otherwise be inaccessible to them in a testing situation.

A memory aid is typically an index card used during an exam—that is **preapproved by the instructor**—and may contain:

- Diagrams, mind maps, general formulas, acronyms, pictures, etc.
- May be organized chronologically, or by module or chapter
- Only makes sense to the person who created it
- Includes only the information the student cannot remember

A proper memory aid will not be useful to the student unless the student knows and understands how to use the information it refers to. If the student doesn't understand the course material, a proper memory aid will not help.

A memory aid is not meant to record all the facts, concepts or processes being tested. **A memory aid shall not:**

- Include specific examples of how formulas are used
- Include complete terms and definitions

- Be full course notes, answer sheets, open textbooks, PowerPoint slides, or a substitute for studying

## Student's Responsibilities

- Student provides appropriate documentation of a disability to Disability Support Services.
- Student discusses impact of their disability with a DSS compliance officer.
  - If deemed appropriate, use of memory aids is added to the student's accommodation letter.
- Student schedules a time to meet with the instructor to discuss use of a memory aid prior to each exam they would like to use the accommodation, and discusses possible permissible information the memory prompt may include for that particular exam. **This meeting should occur at least 72 hours prior to the exam date/time.**
- Student drafts their memory prompt and **submits to their instructor for approval at least 48 hours** prior to the exam.
- Student will reformulate memory prompt if instructor does not approve, or if approved, student will follow procedures for use of memory aid when testing in the WCC Testing Center or through online proctors (such as Examity).

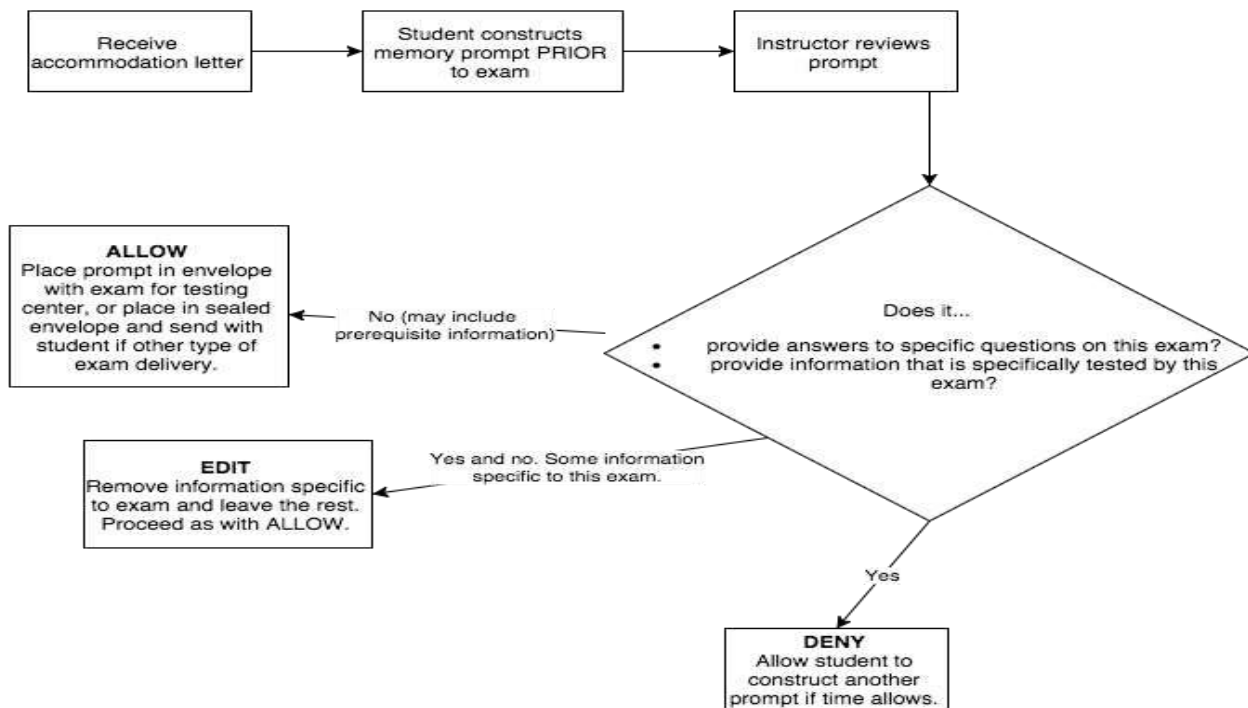
## Instructor's Responsibilities

- Instructor meets with student during scheduled appointment to discuss appropriateness of a memory prompt for a particular exam; **a memory prompt may not be appropriate depending on the nature of the exam.** If memory prompt is appropriate for the situation, determine possible permissible information and a deadline for submitting the memory prompt for approval.
- Instructor will review the submitted memory prompt prior to the student taking the exam and provide feedback for correction until they feel they can approve use of the memory prompt.
- Once memory prompt is approved, Instructor will follow the flow chart (next page) guidelines for providing memory prompt to the DSS office if student is taking the exam in the Testing Center.
  - If the student is taking an exam with an online proctor, Instructor will provide instructions to the students on how to show approved memory aids to online proctor.
- Instructor will maintain the essential standards and learning outcomes of course exams and quizzes.
- Instructor will contact DSS immediately with any questions or concerns.

## Disability Support Services Responsibilities

- DSS discusses accommodation needs with the student and reviews student's documentation.
- DSS generates student accommodation letters to faculty.
- DSS will consult on appropriateness of memory aids for a specific exam as needed.
- DSS will address student/faculty questions and concerns regarding accommodations.

### Flow Chart for Memory Aid approval



## **Release of Information Policy**

The DSS office will not release any written or verbal information about a registered student without expressed written consent of the student. This consent will come in the form of the Student Information Release Authorization form (*Appendix D*), which must be completed and returned to the Admissions Office on the Wallace Campus or Student Services Office on the Sparks Campus.

Please note that students are not required to sign a release of information form to receive reasonable accommodations from the DSS office.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Application for Disability Support Services**

DATE SUBMITTED TO DSS OFFICE: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Student email address\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Program of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your disability and current treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What accommodations are you requesting\*\*? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*DSS Staff will communicate with you predominately through your student e-mail, so please be in the practice of checking it often.\*

\*\* A history of accommodations in itself does not warrant the provision of similar accommodations at Wallace Community College.\*\*

**\*\*\*Information to be provided by a qualified health professional and attached to this application:**

1. Include a statement of the specific diagnosis of the disability.
2. Describe the applicant's functional limitations due to the disability, and the impact of those limitations on physical, perceptual and cognitive abilities.
3. Recommend specific accommodation(s) and for each accommodation, provide a rationale as to how it will reduce the impact of the functional limitation(s).
4. Health professional should state his/her professional credentials, training, work experience and any licenses he/she holds that support his/her qualifications to diagnose and/or treat applicant's disabilities.

\*\*\*\*Once you make application for services and provide the appropriate documentation, the DSS Coordinator will review your paperwork and inform you of the accommodations you may receive.\*\*\*\*

## APPENDIX B

<b>DIFFERENCES BETWEEN K-12 AND COLLEGE DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION PROCESS</b>		
	<b>K-12</b>	<b>College</b>
<i>What is the applicable legislation relating to students with disabilities?</i>	IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act & Americans with Disabilities Act
<i>Who is responsible for initial identification of disability?</i>	School/District	Student (may choose not to self-disclose or seek accommodations)
<i>Who incurs cost of evaluation of and documentation for disability?</i>	School/District	Student
<i>Who makes the decision regarding which accommodations are issued and implemented?</i>	Collaboration between school/district and parents (e.g., IEP Team)	Collaboration between Disability Support Services, student, and faculty
<i>Who is responsible for advocating for student?</i>	School/District/Parent	Student
<i>What is the role of parents in regards to the accommodation process?</i>	Parents are included in decision-making process.	College students (including dual enrollment students) are covered by federal privacy laws. As such, parent consultation is not required, & by law, College faculty/staff cannot speak to parents without student authorization.
<i>Are personal services (i.e., tutoring) available?</i>	Yes	No
<i>Are fundamental alterations of the program, course, or exam (i.e., study guide, limiting # of test questions, word bank, etc.) permitted?</i>	Yes	No
<i>Will I receive similar services as I received at another school/college?</i>	Yes	Not necessarily; implementation of specific accommodations varies from institution to institution

**APPENDIX C**  
**Additional Document Required for Specific Diagnoses**

## **Health Condition, Mobility, Hearing, Speech, or Visual Impairment**

A letter or report from the treating physician, orthopedic specialist, audiologist, otologist, speech pathologist, ophthalmologist, optometrist (as appropriate) which includes:

1. Clearly stated diagnosis
2. Defined levels of current functioning and any limitations
3. Current treatment and medication
4. Current letter/report (within 1 year), dated and signed
5. Necessary accommodations

## **Psychological Disorder**

A letter or report from a mental health professional who is impartial and not related to the student/employee, i.e., psychiatrist, psychologist, neuropsychologist, licensed professional counselor, or clinical social worker which includes:

1. Clearly stated diagnosis based upon current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) criteria
2. Defined levels of current functioning and any limitations
3. Assessment and evaluation instruments used, observations, history, etc.
4. Current treatment and medication
5. Current letter/report (within 1 year), dated and signed
6. Necessary accommodations

## **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**

A comprehensive evaluation by a physician; neurologist; licensed clinical, rehabilitation or school psychologist; neuropsychologist; or psychiatrist which includes:

1. A clear statement of head injury or traumatic brain injury
2. Current impact on student's/employee's functioning and limitations
3. Cognitive and achievement measures used and evaluation results
4. Current residual symptoms and a statement regarding the student's/employee's ability to meet the demands of a postsecondary academic or work environment
5. Current treatment and medication
6. Current letter/report (post-rehab within 1 year), dated and signed
7. Necessary accommodations

## **Learning Disabilities (LD)**

A comprehensive evaluation report written in narrative form by an impartial individual not related to the student/employee, i.e., licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, learning disabilities specialist, licensed professional counselor, educational therapist or diagnostician, which includes:

1. Clearly stated diagnosis of a SPECIFIC learning disability in reading, math, or written language based upon current DSM criteria.
2. Educational/work history documenting the impact of the learning disability
3. Alternative explanations and diagnoses are ruled out
4. Relevant test data with standard scores provided to support conclusions of the measures of intellectual/cognitive/information processing abilities by at least one of the following instruments: (a) WAIS-II or III (b) Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised (c) Stanford-Binet IV (d) Peabody Individual Achievement Test (e) Stanford Test of Academic Skills
5. Statement of the functional impact or limitations of the disability
6. Current report (within 3 years), dated and signed
7. Necessary accommodations

Note: High School IEP, 504 Plan, and/or letter from a physician or other professional will not be sufficient to document a learning disability. The evaluation must be comprehensive.

## **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

A comprehensive evaluation report written in narrative form by an impartial individual not related to the student/employee, i.e., a developmental pediatrician, psychiatrist, neurologist, licensed clinical or educational psychologist, which includes:

1. Clearly stated diagnosis of ADHD based upon current DSM criteria
2. Evidence of early and current impairment in at least two different environments, including past and present symptoms
3. Alternative explanations and diagnoses are ruled out
4. Relevant test data with standard scores provided to support conclusions including at least one of the following instruments: (a) WAIS-II or III (b) Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised (including Written Language) (c) Behavioral Assessment Instruments and Checklists normed on adults
5. Statement of the functional impact or limitations of the disorder and the degree to which it impacts the individual
6. Medications prescribed and how they will impact the student's/employee's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary academic or work environment





## APPENDIX D

# Wallace Community College

Wallace Campus at Dothan, Sparks Campus at Eufaula

## Student Information Release Authorization

In compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and WCC's Policy on Access to and Release of Student Education Records, the College is prohibited from providing certain information from your student records to a third party, such as information on grades, billing, tuition and fees assessments, financial aid (including scholarships, grants, or work-study) and other student record information. This restriction applies, but is not limited, to your parents, your spouse, or a sponsor.

You may, at your discretion, grant the College permission to release information about your student records to a third party by submitting a completed Student Information Release Authorization. You must complete a separate form for each third party to whom you grant access to information on your student records. The specified information will be made available only if requested by the authorized third party. The College does not automatically send information to a third party.

Submit your completed form to the Office of Enrollment Services on the Wallace Campus in Dothan or the Student Services Office on the Sparks Campus in Eufaula. Please note that your authorization to release information has no expiration date; however, you may revoke your authorization at any time by written request. This form allows third parties to access student record information from any Wallace Community College campus. NOTE: For the third party designee you name on this form, this release overrides all FERPA directory suppression information that you have set up in your student record. However, it is College policy not to release certain aspects of student records (e.g., registration, grades, GPA) over the phone or via email.

This information release authorization is intended for use only by the offices listed below:

### A. Student Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Last, First, Middle)      SSN \_\_\_\_\_ (Last 4 Digits)      Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ (Street/PO, APT, City, State, Zip)      Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Third Party Designee

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Last, First, Middle)      SSN \_\_\_\_\_ (Last 4 Digits)  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ (Street/PO, APT, City, State, Zip)      Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Relation to Student \_\_\_\_\_      Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

### C. Information Types Allowed (CHECK ONE OR MORE OF THE BOXES ABOVE TO GRANT AUTHORIZATION)

- ☐ Grades/GPA, demographic, registration, student ID number, academic progress status, and/or enrollment information  
☐ Billing statements, charges, credits, payments, past due amounts, and/or collection activity  
☐ Financial aid awards, application data, disbursements, eligibility, and/or financial aid satisfactory academic progress  
☐ Access to student records maintained by the Office of Enrollment Services and the Business Office, including all of the above examples  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### D. Certification

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*If you require any special accommodations under ADA, please let us know.*

Fall 2014

**APPENDIX E**  
**Testing Center Policies**

- 1) The Testing Center is not to be used for studying.
  - a) The Computer Lab inside the Advising Center has computers and tables that may be utilized for this purpose.
- 2) The Testing Center printer is not available for printing classroom materials.
  - a) The Computer Lab inside the Advising Center has computers and a printer that may be utilized for this purpose.
- 3) If a student is unable to take his/her exam, the student must immediately depart the Testing Center and log into a computer in the Advising Center Computer Lab, then email the instructor to arrange for a make-up exam date/time.
- 4) Once a student receives his/her test, they may not leave the Testing Center without submitting the test to the authorized proctor on site.
  - a) If a student goes to the restroom during his/her test, he/she must return the test to the authorized proctor on site.
  - b) Students are not allowed to take their cell phone or any personal items out of the Testing Center until they have completed their test.
- 5) All exam sessions are monitored and may be recorded.
- 6) Testing Center staff is authorized to dismiss a student from an exam session for violation of any Testing Center policies, for misconduct, or for any perceived forms of academic dishonesty/cheating.

By signing this form, I agree to comply with the Testing Center Policies, as expressed above.

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Name

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Student ID number

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Date