

Services for Persons with Disabilities

The College has the following physical facilities for disabled students:

1. All parking lots have designated parking areas equipped with wheelchair ramps and guard rails.
2. Restrooms are equipped with holding rails and stalls large enough to accommodate wheelchairs.
3. All buildings have elevated entrances to accommodate wheelchairs.
4. Drinking fountains and lavatories are designed to accommodate wheelchair persons.
5. The residence hall facility has rooms designated to accommodate the physically challenged.

All programs and facilities are available for qualified disabled applicants. Career guidance is available to assist disabled applicants in selecting a program in which they can be reasonably sure of success. Counselors and academic advisors will assist applicants in selecting an appropriate program of study. If needed, appropriate accommodations are available for disabled students through the ADA office.

Students who believe that special instructional accommodations should be made for them due to a disability should obtain an Accommodations Request Form from the ADA Coordinator, 256.331.5262. Information regarding special accommodations is also included in each course syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. Documentation of need for accommodation may be required. The College will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations. Contact the ADA Coordinator for more information, 256.331.5262.

Criteria for Disability Documentation

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 state that qualified students with disabilities who meet the technical and academic standards at Alabama Community College institutions are entitled to reasonable accommodations. Under these laws, a disability is defined as any physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity, a history of such an impairment, or the perception of such an impairment. Alabama Community College System institutions do NOT provide disability documentation for students. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations and to provide appropriate documentation to the College office responsible for handling the request. Appropriate documentation is defined as that which meets the following criteria:

Health Condition, Mobility, Hearing, Speech or Visual Impairment

A letter or report from treating physician, orthopedic specialist, audiologist, speech pathologist, ophthalmologist, or other specialist as appropriate, to include the following:

1. clearly stated diagnosis;
2. defined levels of functioning and any limitations;
3. current treatment and medication; and
4. current letter/report, dated and signed.

Psychological Disorder

A letter or report from a mental health professional (psychologist, neuropsychologist, licensed professional counselor), to include the following:

1. clearly stated diagnosis (DSM-IV criteria),
2. defined levels of functioning and any limitations;
3. supporting documentation (i.e. test data, history, observations, etc.);
4. current treatment and medication; and
5. current letter/report, dated and signed.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

A comprehensive evaluation report by a rehabilitation counselor, speech-language pathologist, orthopedic specialist, and/or neuropsychologist (or other specialist as appropriate), including:

1. assessment of cognitive abilities, including processing speed and memory;
2. analysis of educational achievement skills and limitations (reading comprehension, written language, spelling, and mathematical abilities);
3. defined levels of functioning and limitations in all affected areas (communication, vision, hearing, mobility, psychological, seizures, etc.);
4. current treatment and medication; and
5. current letter/report, post-rehabilitation, dated and signed.

Learning Disabilities

A comprehensive evaluation report from a clinical psychologist, psychiatrist, neuropsychologist, school psychologist, learning disability specialist, or diagnostician, including:

1. clear statement of presenting problem; diagnostic interview;
2. educational history of documenting the impact of the learning disability;
3. alternative explanations and diagnoses are dismissed;
4. relevant test data with standard scores are provided to support conclusions, including at least:
 - (a) WAIS-R;
 - (b) Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-Revised, including Written Language;
 - (c) Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Processing Battery to substantiate any processing problems;
5. clearly stated diagnosis of a learning disability based on DSM-IV criteria;
6. defined levels of functioning and any limitations, supported by evaluation data; and
7. current report, dated and signed.

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

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

A comprehensive evaluation report from a physician, psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, neurologist, or neuropsychologist, including:

1. clear statement of presenting problem; diagnostic interview;
2. evidence of early and current impairment in at least two different environments (comprehensive history);
3. alternative explanations and diagnoses are ruled out.
4. relevant test data with standard scores are provided to support conclusions, including at least:
 - (a) WAISR;
 - (b) Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery-Revised including Written Language;
 - (c) Behavioral Assessment Instruments for ADD/ADHD formed on adults;
5. clearly stated diagnosis of ADD or ADHD based on DSMIV criteria;
6. defined levels of functioning and any limitations, support by evaluation data; and
7. current report, dated and signed.

Note: High School IEP, 504 Plan, and/or letter from a physician or other professional will not be sufficient to document ADD or ADHD. Medication cannot be used to imply diagnosis.

Providing Services for Students with Disabilities

Services and reasonable accommodations are provided pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Alabama Community College System is committed to working with individuals with disabilities. It is a goal of the Alabama Community College System to ensure that students with disabilities have the programmatic and architectural accesses needed for integration into campus life. All applicants must meet the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in programs and/or activities at Alabama Community College System institutions. Alabama Community College System institutions will not reduce standards in the grading and/or evaluation of students. Academic requirements that are determined by Northwest-Shoals Community College to be essential or fundamental will not be modified. Alabama Community College System institutions strive to eliminate barriers to learning or participation in other institutional activities, and provide the following services for students and faculty:

- screening of disability documentation;
- determination of appropriate accommodations;
- communication with faculty and/or staff regarding student needs; and
- referral to other available campus and/or community resources.

Providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities requires an individual assessment of need and is a problem solving process. Specific accommodations depend upon the nature and requirements of a particular course or activity and the skills and functional abilities of a particular student. Appropriate accommodations may include:

- extended time on exams;
- permission to tape lectures;
- change in test format;
- priority registration;
- enlarged print/graphics;
- textbooks on tape;
- handouts of overhead materials;
- removal of structural barriers;
- class note taker;
- use of spell check;
- extra time for assignments; or
- alternative evaluation methods.

Students with disabilities are responsible for informing the College about the disability and the need for reasonable accommodation. This should be done prior to or upon enrollment at the College. Students must furnish adequate documentation of their disabilities from medical or other appropriate professionals in order to substantiate the need for services.

Contact Information

Sharon Jo McBride: 256.331.5262