

# OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY FACULTY/STAFF HANDBOOK



Oglethorpe University  
Office of Accessibility Services  
Turner Lynch Campus Center  
4484 Peachtree Road NE  
Atlanta, GA 30319  
(404) 364-8335

Dear Faculty and Staff:

Thank you for taking the time to review the Office of Accessibility Services Faculty and Staff Handbook. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, The Americans with Disability Act and the ADA Amendments, Oglethorpe University is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment. Our primary goal is to ensure equal access for all of our students. Our institution remains committed to providing reasonable accommodations to all students with accessibility needs. Our aim is to create and maintain an accessible environment, where our student will have the opportunity to thrive during their time at Oglethorpe University. In order to achieve this goal, we must embrace a strong collaborative process that involves all members of our campus community. The Office of Accessibility Services is extremely excited to work closely with the all students, staff, and faculty at Oglethorpe University to support the mission of our office. Please use the contents of this handbook to assist you in expanding your existing knowledge regarding your role in the accommodation process at Oglethorpe University. The Office of Accessibility Services is available to assist you at (404) 364-8335 or via email at [accessibility@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:accessibility@oglethorpe.edu). We look forward to working with you, as we support our amazing student population.

Sincerely,

Heather R. Paige, M.S.  
Assistant Director for Academic Success/Accessibility Services Coordinator

# **Oglethorpe University Accessibility Services Handbook for Faculty/Staff**

## **Purpose**

This handbook serves as a resource for students with additional needs. It contains information regarding the policies and operating procedures of the Office of Accessibility Services (OA). The Office of Accessibility Services determines the eligibility for support services, as well as reasonable accommodations for students who have accessibility-related needs.

## **Mission**

The Office of Accessibility Services promotes equitable and accessible education, meaningful self-advocacy, awareness of disability issues and inclusiveness for the entire Oglethorpe University community. Through consistent use of best practices in the field, we strive to reshape the attitude and behaviors toward awareness of accessibility issues and concerns.

## **Student Rights**

Every student at Oglethorpe University with accessibility needs has the right to obtain timely, reasonable accommodations, in order to receive the same opportunity for academic success and holistic development, which is enjoyed by students who do not have a disability.

## **Location and Hours:**



The Office of Accessibility Services is located inside the Turner Lynch Campus Center (TLCC), room 237, near the student exchange area.

### **OFFICE HOURS**

Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
(Request for accommodation requires a scheduled appointment)

### **TESTING HOURS**

Monday – Thursday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm  
Friday 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Hours may vary at peak times

## Disability Law

### Rehabilitation Act of 1973

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“No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States.....shall, solely by reason of....disability, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

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It is the goal of this university, to provide full access to education for all students and individuals with disabilities, and to create an inclusive campus, that is fully accessible to all students. Each student has the right to confidentiality in regards to their accessibility needs and personal information. Information will be disclosed to interested parties only on an as needed basis, under FERPA. However, each student can choose to disclose information to members of the faculty on their own if they wish, but **should not be asked by faculty, staff, or administration the exact nature or diagnosis of their condition.**

It is our policy at Oglethorpe University to comply fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the ADA Amendments Act of 2009, and all other federal and State laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability. Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, clearly state that programs and services must be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Under the provisions of Section 504, it is unlawful to discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students. All students who self-identified, provided documentation of disability, and requested reasonable accommodations are entitled to receive authorized modifications of programs, appropriate academic exceptions, or auxiliary aids that enable them to fully participate in and benefit from all educational programming and activities.

Information regarding a student’s disability is considered confidential and protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Information can be shared without the student’s written permission in the event of a medical emergency, an official court order, or behavior that endangers the health and safety of student or others.

## Student Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to self-identify himself or herself to the Office of Accessibility Services, and to provide acceptable documentation of a disability. All accommodations are authorized on a case-by-case basis. All students are entitled to the right to have equal access to an education of excellence. However, all students registered with the Office of Accessibility Services have certain responsibilities and expectations regarding their accommodations. Each student must do the following:

- Initiate contact with the Office of Accessibility Services in a timely manner to schedule and initial intake appointment. Schedule the appointment prior to the first semester of enrollment or immediately following the diagnosis of a disability.
- Submit appropriate documentation of disability
- Following approval of accommodations, the student must schedule an appointment with the Coordinator of Accessibility Services to receive printed copies of the Letter of Accommodations (LOA).
- Provide a hard copy of the LOA to the faculty member in each class. If necessary, schedule a meeting time with the faculty member to review the LOA, and how the accommodations will be implemented in the course.
- Within a reasonable time frame, notify the Office of Accessibility Services of any additional needs or required changes to the authorized accommodations as soon as they arise.
- Adhere to Oglethorpe University's Code of Student Conduct.
- Maintain the academic standards required of all Oglethorpe University students.

### Documentation

Complete documentation guidelines are available at <https://success.oglethorpe.edu/accessibility-services/accommodation-services/> in the "Documentation Guidelines" section. **All submitted documentation is confidential.**

- The documentation must clearly document, diagnose, and discuss the condition.
- Copies of medical records are not an acceptable form of supporting documentation.
- Medical Evaluations must be **current**. As a general guideline, the Office of Accessibility Services requires that the documentation is prepared within the **last two years**. The office does reserve the request an updated evaluation or additional supporting documentation. Additionally, the Office of Accessibility Services will work directly with students who have documentation that is older than two years.

## Submission

Supporting documentation can be submitted by one of the following methods:

- Bring documentation in person to the Office of Accessibility Services inside the A\_Lab room 237.
- Email to [accessibility@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:accessibility@oglethorpe.edu)
- Mail to:  
Oglethorpe University  
The Office of Accessibility Services  
4484 Peachtree Street NE  
Atlanta, GA 30319

## Testing Accommodations

If using the Office of Accessibility Services reserved testing space, it is the student's responsibility to comply with the testing accommodations procedures.

### Scheduling an exam

The student must complete an exam request for each individual exam. The form can be accessed via the Testing Accommodation Request form link available on the Office of Accessibility Services page: <https://success.oglethorpe.edu/formsanddocuments/>. All exam requests must be submitted at least three business days prior to exam date. Failure to comply with exam scheduling requirements can result in the inability to complete the exam on the assigned exam date.

### Rescheduling an exam

Students are not authorized to make any changes to the scheduled exam without the consent of the course instructor. Written documentation must be received from the course instructor to reschedule an exam. The student is required to submit any required documentation to the course instructor to receive approval to reschedule the exam.

### Exam Rules and Regulations

- Students must be on time for the exam. Any student who arrives more than 15 minutes late, for any reason, will have to contact their course instructor directly to determine if the exam can be given at a different time.
- No breaks (unless listed in the LOA). Student should schedule breaks accordingly.
- No bags, books, purses, coats, cell phones, or music devices are permitted in the testing area.
- Exam times are strictly enforced. Student are expected to complete the exam within the time frame commensurate with authorized accommodations. **There are no exams with unlimited time.**

### Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodations are provided to students with disabilities to equal the playing field in the academic world. Accommodations are implemented to provide the student with a fair opportunity to learn and demonstrate their acquired knowledge. No two students are the same; students with the same disability may not use the same accommodations. Additionally, two students that with the same accommodations may have different conditions. Students have the right to determine when they would like to use an authorized accommodation, based on their experience with their disability.

Some examples include:

- Audio or electronic format texts
- Peer note takers
- Extended Time
- Distraction-reduced testing environment
- Large print resources
- Preferential seating
- Adaptive equipment
- Assistive listening devices in the classroom
- Audio recorders
- Interpreters in the classroom

## Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty members are expected to work collaboratively with the Office of Accessibility Services to support students who have authorized accommodations and academic support services, in a fair and timely manner, to students with disabilities.

The course instructor should welcome students with additional needs to self-identify early in the semester by including a statement in the course syllabus. Additionally, the instructor can also make an announcement during the first class meeting. In addition, the instructor can support the student by being available during office hours to address additional concerns.

The instructor should be aware of the individual comfort level of each student. Some students may be extremely open about the nature of their challenges, while other students may be less willing to discuss their difficulties and challenges.

No individual instructor has the unilateral authority to deny a student an authorized academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aids or service approved by the Coordinator of Accessibility Services. Any faculty member that disputes (i) what or how adjustments or aids that are to be provided for a course, (ii) whether a course is deemed to be an essential requirement of the program, or (iii) whether an adjustment would be a fundamental alteration of the course or program **must** be forwarded to the Office of Accessibility Services.

### Sample Syllabus Statement

The Office of Accessibility Services recommends that each course instructor make the following announcement during the first class meeting and/or include the statement on the syllabus informing the student of the available services.

“Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the Office of Accessibility Services to receive authorization for accommodations. Students are required to provide reasonable notice prior to requesting an accommodation.”

#### PLEASE NOTE:

1. Students have the right to seek accommodations at any point during the semester.
2. Authorized accommodations are not retroactive.
3. Each student is expected to earn their course grade. The instructor should not inflate grades based on effort. The expectation is that the instructor will be graded based on their academic performance.



### Peer Note Taking

If a student requests assistance locating a note taker, please make the following announcement during class. Additionally, instructors can include the statement below in the course syllabus.

“Accessibility Services is in need of a peer note taker for this course. If you are interested in assisting a fellow classmate, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services. There will be a small stipend provided for your service and support.

### Exams and Quizzes

Students receiving accommodations do not have to utilize the Office of Accessibility testing rooms. After successfully completion of the exam, the Office of Accessibility Services will follow the steps listed below:

- Provide each course instructor with an electronic copy of the completed exam via email.
- A hard copy of the exam will be placed in the assigned campus mailbox for the course instructor.

All reasonable efforts will be made by the Office of Accessibility Services to schedule the exam for the same time and date as the scheduled exam in the classroom. Due to space and staff availability, it may be necessary to schedule an exam on a different date and time. Any adjustment will require instructor consent.

### Common Course Accommodations

*The types of course and testing accommodations that course instructors may see on Letters of Accommodations from the Office of Accessibility Services are detailed below. The purpose of academic accommodations is to provide equal opportunity and access. Accommodations are not meant to provide an unfair academic advantage or guarantee academic success. Course instructors are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility Services with any questions or concerns regarding authorized accommodations.*

## Classroom Accommodations

- **Access to Power Point and Overhead Materials**  
Students with disabilities may request an instructor make course materials available on overhead projectors or Power Point slides. However, instructors are not required to create new materials. The course instructor can make materials available in the electronic classroom or provide photocopies to distribute during class.
- **Alternate Text**  
Common alternate formats include enlarged texts, recorded texts, electronic texts, or brailled materials.
- **Attendance Policy Flexibility**  
Student with accessibility needs may be more prone to missing class due to medical occurrences, chronic illnesses, mobility difficulties, or other disability related circumstances. Flexibility with the course attendance policy **does not** mean that the attendance policy does not exist. The instructor will work with the student to determine the specifics of any attendance policy adjustments.
- **Permission to Leave or Move Around in Class**  
Sitting for long periods of time can have an impact on the symptoms of the authorized disability. Some students may need to leave class for a brief period of time to take medication or attend to medical needs. The Office of Accessibility Services encourages student to exit the class in the least disruptive manner possible.
- **Permission to Record Classes**  
Student with disabilities may request permission to record class lectures. Recording class materials in audio or video format is allowed when the student provides notification of the accommodations to the instructor. The student must provide his/her own recording device. Additionally, the student may be required to sign the Oglethorpe University Non-Disclosure Agreement, prior to recording the lecture. The Office of Accessibility Services is available to answer any questions or concerns regarding the recording accommodation.
- **Use of a Laptop for Taking Notes**  
Students who, due to an existing disability, are experiencing difficulty taking notes by hand may request authorization to use a laptop during class. Laptops will assist the student take notes in a timely manner, thus allowing the student to keep pace with fellow students in the course.

## Testing Accommodations

- **Extended Time**  
Based on the medical documentation that is submitted to the Office of Accessibility Services, the typical authorized extended time is both time and half or double time. Extended time does not apply to take home exams.
- **Reduced Distraction Environment**  
It is common for students with disabilities to be authorized to request a separate “reduced distraction” testing space. The authorized space may be a conference room, unused classroom, or instructor’s office. The space provides the student with a quieter space where the student will benefit from having a reduced amount of distractions.
- **Use of a Computer for Essay Exams**  
The use of a computer during an exam assists students who may experience difficulty using their hands to complete the written portion of exams. Additionally, this accommodation helps the student to provide legible responses that are well organized and easier to read. The personal computer **must** be authorized by the Office of Accessibility Services. The internet on the computer will be disabled during the exam period.
- **Use of Spell Check for Written Exams**  
This accommodation allows the student to use a dictionary or the spell check function during the exam so that they will not be penalized for basic spelling and grammatical errors when they are otherwise able to provide accurate responses to the questions that are being asked.
- **Use of a Calculator for Exams**  
The use of a calculator is permissible as long as the calculator is unable to perform the specific functions that are being tested on the exam.

## Housing Accommodations

### Food Allergies

Oglethorpe University has made the decision to transition to a peanut-free campus. Currently, we have at least one enrolled student who has reported an airborne nut allergy. Warning signs have been placed on the doors of the assigned classrooms. The course instructor will receive notification at the beginning of the semester, if a student with a peanut allergy has registered for their course. At that time, the course instructor should make an announcement during class or post a message in the electronic class to ask fellow students to avoid bringing any food items that contain nuts into the classroom.

### Service Animal and Emotional Support Animals (ESA) on Campus

Oglethorpe University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Fair Housing Act (FHA) regarding the authorization of Service and Emotional Support Animals on campus.

#### **Service Animals**

- A Service Animal is a dog or miniature horse that has been individually trained to perform specific tasks for individuals with disabilities.
- The student must have a disability as defined by the ADA.
- The student must register with the Office of Accessibility Services, if the service animal will be housed on the campus so that accommodations can be coordinated.
- It is highly recommended that the student initiate contact with the Office of Accessibility Services as early as possible (approximately 3-6 weeks) to allow time to gather and review all necessary documents.
- The service animal should have a harness, leash, or tether.
- The University Community **should** adhere to the following guidelines:
  - Do not ask questions about the student's disability
  - Do not pet or feed a service animal
  - Do not attempt to separate the animal from the owner
  - Do not startle or tease the service animal
- Only two questions can be asked to determine if animal is a service animal:
  - Is the service animal required because of a disability?
  - What work or task is the animal trained to perform?

### **Emotional Support Animal (ESA)**

- An ESA is an animal that provides assistance or emotional support which alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a disability.
- An ESA **does not** receive the same protection as service animals.
- The ESA may be considered for living in the student's **assigned** residence hall. However, the ESA is **not** permitted in other areas of the university. The ESA **must** be contained within the privately assigned living space.
- Whenever the ESA is unmonitored or unattended (example: when the student is in class) the ESA must be caged or crated.
- The ESA must be on a leash when outside of the assigned living space.
- All roommates/suitemates must agree to the ESA being allowed in the assigned living space.
- **An ESA may not be left overnight in campus housing to be cared by another student.**