



Student Accessibility Resources
(SAR)
Handbook for Policies and
Procedures

Updated August 7, 2019

Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction to Gulf Coast State College Student Accessibility Resource	4
Mission Statement.....	4
Office Hours.....	4
Location	4
Contact Information	4
Methods of Communication	5
Rights and Responsibilities	6
• <i>Registration with Student Accessibility Resources</i>	6
• <i>Student Accessibility Resources (SAR) Rights and Responsibilities</i>	6
• <i>Faculty Rights and Responsibilities</i>	7
• <i>Students Rights and Responsibilities</i>	7
Relevant Guiding Legislation	8
Section 2: Everything You Need to Know About Reasonable Accommodations	9
Defining Reasonable Accommodations.....	9
Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Accommodations.....	9
Changes in Your Accommodation Needs.....	10
GCSC Nursing Student: Procedures for Requesting Semester Accommodation Form	10
Faculty Notification Letters	10
When are Accommodation Requests Denied.....	11
Section 3: Documentation	12
General Guidelines for Disability Documentation	12
Incomplete Documentation.....	14
Maintenance of Documentation.....	14
Section 4: Using Accommodations and Student Accessibility Resources at GCSC	15
Testing Accommodations	15
• <i>Procedures for Scheduling Testing Accommodations</i>	15
• <i>Register Blast-How to Register for Your Test</i>	16
• <i>Online Exam Accommodations</i>	16
• <i>Change in Date/Time of Quiz/Test/Exam</i>	16
• <i>Day of Exam Instructions</i>	17
• <i>Testing and Academic Integrity</i>	17
Note-Taking Support	18
<i>Policies and Procedures for Receiving Note-Taking Support</i>	18
<i>Audio Recording Policy</i>	18
Course Materials in Alternative Formats	19

<i>Procedure for Requesting</i>	19
Sign Language Interpreters	20
<i>Classroom Interpreters</i>	20
<i>Role of the Interpreter</i>	20
Adaptive or Assistive Technology.....	21
Section 5: Campus Accessibility Needs	22
Classrooms.....	22
Attending Campus Events	22
Service Animals Policy	22
Support Animals Policy.....	22
Section 6: Advocacy	23
Talking to Your Professor	23
10 Tips for Self-Advocacy.....	23
Section 7: Confidentiality, Appeals and Grievances Procedures	24
Policy on Confidentiality	24
GCSC Appeals and Grievance Procedures for Alleged Discrimination.....	24
<i>Student and Applicant for Admissions Reporting Procedures</i>	25
Section 8: Community Resources for People with Disabilities	26
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation-Florida Department of Education.....	26
Life Management Center of Northwest Florida.....	26
Disability Resource Center	27
Division of Blind Services	27
FSU Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (FSU-CARD).....	27

Section 1: Introduction to Gulf Coast State College Student Accessibility Resources

Mission Statement

The mission of Student Accessibility Resources (SAR) at Gulf Coast State College is to help create a fair and inclusive learning environment through specific educational accommodations and support services guided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As set by the standards of the GCSC mission, we want to assist our students in their educational, career, and personal achievements/goals with equal access to all programs using both on-campus and off-campus resources. In addition, we advocate for our students in order to lift educational barriers while empowering and embracing their differences by exploring new awareness campaigns and trainings for the GCSC population.

Office Hours

Monday through Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm
Other appointment times available upon request.

Location

Student Union East, Ground Floor, Room 60

Contact Information

E-Mail: SAR@gulfcoast.edu
Phone: 850-747-3243
Fax: 850-767-8034

Methods of Communication

Communication between students and SAR is important during the semester so as to keep students up-to-date on current events, new policies and procedures, or questions/concerns with accommodations. SAR uses the following methods in communicating with students:

1. **Email:** SAR's main form of communication is through students Gulf Coast email (xxxx@my.gulfcoast.edu) which can be accessed through Lighthouse. Students should be checking their Gulf Coast email periodically to ensure they are receiving information in a timely manner.
2. **Phone:** SAR may contact students via the phone number provided on their application or any updated number provided to SAR.
3. **Mail:** After SAR has attempted to contact students via Email, Canvas, or Phone, letters may be mailed to the address provided on the student's application or any updated address provided to SAR.
4. **Appointments:** Students are highly encouraged to make appointments with staff members if they are inquiring about services, finding difficulties with accommodative services, or any in-person communication. Please contact SAR via phone at 850-747-3243 or email SAR@gulfcoast.edu to schedule an appointment.

Rights and Responsibilities

Registration with Student Accessibility Resources

Registration with Student Accessibility Resources is a separate process from applying for admission to Gulf Coast State College. Interested students should contact Student Accessibility Resources by phone at 850-747-3243 or email SAR@gulfcoast.edu. We advise that you **do not** submit disability documentation to the Admissions Office. Services and accommodations **cannot** be provided until the student has registered and provided the appropriate documentation to SAR.

Student Accessibility Resources (SAR) Rights and Responsibilities

Student Accessibility Resources 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. SAR 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 to not self-identify when they enter Gulf Coast State College do not forfeit their right to identify themselves and to receive accommodations at a later date. However, the College is not obligated to provide accommodations or services for students with disabilities until students are registered with SAR and have made known their need for accommodations **each academic term/semester**.

Student Accessibility Resources has the right to:

- Request and receive current disability documentation that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if the documentation demonstrates that the request is not warranted or the student fails to provide appropriate documentation;
- Select among equally effective accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- Refuse accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services that impose a fundamental alteration of a College program or activity.

Student Accessibility Resources has the responsibility to:

- Provide information to students with disabilities in accessible formats upon request;
- Ensure that courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities are available and usable in the most integrated and appropriate settings;
- Review Application for accommodations and services to determine eligibility for services and nature of accommodations;
- Provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and auxiliary aids and services;
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication, and to disclose such information only when permitted by law;
- Serve as a liaison between students and faculty;
- Serve as a resource on disability issues for the Gulf Coast State College campus community.

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

Faculty members have the right to:

- Identify and establish standards for courses and academic programs;
- Verify through the Student Accessibility Resources the eligibility for and nature of accommodations before provision of accommodations occurs;
- Request assistance and resources from Student Accessibility Resources.

Faculty members are responsible for:

- Evaluating students solely on the basis of their academic performance;
- Working with the student and Student Accessibility Resources to ensure the provision of reasonable accommodations;
- Fostering an accessible learning environment to all learners;
- Addressing concerns about disability accommodations with Student Accessibility Resources.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

Students with documented disabilities at GCSC have the right to:

- **Equal access** to educational and co-curricular programs, services, and activities facilitated by GCSC.
- **Equal opportunity** to learn and receive reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services as supported by their documentation which do not represent a fundamental alteration of the essential educational components of the academic programs.
- **Confidential treatment** of disability-related records that is housed at Student Accessibility Resources. Only persons working at, or in collaboration with SAR have access to these records.

Students with documented disabilities at GCSC are responsible for:

- Meeting qualification and maintaining academic, technical, and institutional standards for courses, programs, services, activities and facilities.
- Providing current and appropriate documentation in accordance with established GCSC guidelines. Typically, Individualized Education Plans (IEP), 504 Plans from a secondary school, or notes on physician prescription pads do not provide thorough information for the documentation of disability. However, such materials will be accepted as supplemental information.
- Initiating and following established procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services in a timely manner.
- Completing the Semester Accommodation Plan at the beginning of each new semester AND obtaining the "Faculty Notification Letter" (FNL) for each class.
- Delivering "Faculty Notification Letter" and facilitating discussion with instructors regarding registration with SAR and eligible accommodations.
- **Returning a signed copy of the FNL to the SAR office**

Students are advised to:

- **Meet with each of their professors to discuss the testing and academic accommodations that he or she anticipate needing for each class;**
- **Self-disclose their disability status to faculty and staff *when appropriate*;**
- **Exercise self-advocacy to meet their disability related needs.**

Relevant Guiding Legislation

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973-Section 504:

Provides a 'right of access' statute to individuals with disabilities. Section 504 provides persons with disabilities the right of access into, or to derive benefits from, any program or activity receiving federal financial funding.

The Americans with Disabilities Act:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is civil rights legislation that affects approximately 54 million Americans with Disabilities. This federal law provides a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The ADA is regarded as the most sweeping civil rights legislation since The Civil Rights Act of 1964. The ADA protects the civil rights of individuals with disabilities by ensuring equal access to employment, state and local government agencies, transportation, public and private facilities, and telecommunications.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states in part that . . .

"No otherwise qualified handicapped individual...shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Disabled Individual:

Both the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 define a "disabled individual" as anyone who:

1. has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working; or
2. has a record of such impairment; or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment.

Section 2: Everything You Need to Know about Reasonable Accommodations

Defining Reasonable Accommodations

- Reasonable accommodations are appropriate adjustments to programs, policy, and practice that make aspects of the college experience accessible and provide equal opportunities to Gulf Coast State College students with disabilities. An equal opportunity means a chance to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to a similarly situated student without disabilities.
- Students are not charged for the cost incurred in providing reasonable accommodations, including auxiliary aids and services (e.g., sign language interpreters, note-taking support, text conversion to alternative accessible formats, etc.).
- To determine reasonable accommodations, SAR may seek information from appropriate college personnel regarding essential standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities. The Coordinator makes the final determinations of reasonable accommodations in collaboration with the student and faculty as warranted.
- Reasonable accommodations are determined by examining:
 1. Environmental barriers limiting curricular, facility, or programmatic access.
 2. Whether or not the student has access to the course, program, service, activity, or facility without an accommodation.
 3. The range of possible accommodations that might remove the barriers.
 4. Whether or not essential elements of the course, program, service, activity, or facility are compromised by the accommodations.

Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Accommodations

- Students must follow procedures for requesting accommodations:
 1. Complete Application and Forms for Accommodations and Services;
 2. Submit Disability Documentation;
 3. Sign Consent of Release of Information form;
 4. Complete Semester Accommodation Request form each subsequent semester student is enrolled in courses at Gulf Coast State College;
 5. Student picks-up Faculty Notification Letters and deliver to professors.

It must be noted that Gulf Coast State College and Student Accessibility Resources reserve the right to deny requests for services or accommodations while the receipt of appropriate disability documentation is pending.

Changes in Your Accommodations Needs

Students are entitled to request additional accommodations or academic adjustments during the course of the semester, or at any time during their tenure at Gulf Coast State College. Students are also entitled to request modifications to the nature of the accommodations. Students must work with Student Accessibility Resources to determine the appropriate changes to accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services. The office should be contacted at earliest indication of emerging accommodation needs. Students must allow at least two weeks for the coordination and provision of new accommodations or modifications to existing accommodations.

It must be noted that Gulf Coast State College and Student Accessibility Resources reserve the right to deny requests for services or accommodations while the receipt of appropriate disability documentation is pending.

GCSC Nursing Students: Procedure for Requesting Semester Accommodation Form

Per the Nursing Program at Gulf Coast State College, ALL nursing students MUST provide their Professors with the Semester Accommodation Plan for each semester after registration with SAR. The student should adhere to the following procedure to obtain a Semester Accommodation Plan for the new semester:

1. Consult with a member of the SAR Staff if any changes are necessary to student's current accommodation plan.
2. If the student feels that the previous accommodation plan is suitable, he or she can simply request a Semester Accommodation Plan at the beginning of the semester as well as any applicable forms that are necessary for coordinating specific accommodations as outlined in Section 4 (Request for Note-Taking Support, Request for Classroom Materials in Alternative Formats, Etc.) and submit them to Student Accessibility Resources.
 - a. Students can submit a request either in person, through email (SAR@gulfcoast.edu) or phone 850-747-3243.
3. Semester Accommodation Plans are generally available for pick up and student distribution to Professors within 48 hours of submission of the request in Student Accessibility Resources.
 - a. Upon pick-up, it is the student is responsible for bringing each form to their Professors and discuss accommodations at the beginning of each semester.

Faculty Notification Letters

Students must provide their Professors with the Faculty Notification Letter for each course he/she is enrolled in. The letter will be automatically generated after the student has re-registered for accommodations and signed his/her Semester Accommodation Plan. The Faculty Notification Letters will be available for pick-up within 48 hours of submission of the request. Faculty Notification Letters are to be picked up at the front desk in SUE 60. Upon pick-up, it is the student's responsibility to bring each letter to their Professor and discuss accommodations at the beginning of each semester.

Email notifications will no longer be the process for notification of accommodations to Professors. For more information about faculty notification methods, please contact SAR.

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations

Examples of some of the most frequently requested accommodations include:

- Extended time for quizzes and exams
- Distraction-reduced environment for exams
- Note-taking support
- Permission to record lectures
- Classroom materials and textbooks in alternative formats

When are accommodation requests denied?

The College provides accommodations unless they fall under one of the following four categories:

- *Fundamental Alteration*
- *Accommodation Request is Not Supported*
- *Undue Hardship*
- *Personal Service*

Fundamental Alteration: If an accommodation reduces the academic standards of the College, its schools, departments, or courses, the College denies the accommodation because it is unreasonable. Academic standards are essential for every student. It is unreasonable to alter these fundamental standards with an accommodation.

Accommodation Request is Not Supported: An accommodation must be designed to both provide access to the College's programs and minimize the impact of the disability. In some cases, the requested accommodation cannot be substantiated as 'minimizing the impact of the disability' based upon a review of the submitted documentation and/or the subjective experience of the student. The accommodation is denied in these cases since the removal of a barrier is not warranted or necessary when compared to the limitations imposed by the disability.

Undue Hardship: If an accommodation costs too much or is impossible to administer, the College denies the accommodation because it is unreasonable. An unjustifiable financial burden will have an adverse effect on the entire College system. An undue administrative burden occurs when the College does not have the time or ability to respond to a request.

Personal Service: If a request for an accommodation falls under the definition of a personal service, the College denies the request because it is unreasonable. Personal services are those that a person with a disability must use regardless of attendance at the College. In addition, personal services are those for which no correlation between the disability's functional limitation and program access can be established.

Notification of Denial for Accommodations

If a student is found to be ineligible for one or more requested accommodation, a SAR staff member will meet with the student to discuss denial, find alternatives, and advise on the appropriate appeals process.

Section 3: Documentation

General Guidelines for Disability Documentation

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Restoration Act, allows colleges and universities to require disability documentation to verify the need for accommodations. What constitutes acceptable documentation is often an area of uncertainty for those preparing students for higher education. Because of this, Student Accessibility Resources (SAR) at Gulf Coast State College, in accordance with the standards established by the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), has adopted the following guidelines to serve as a resource to potential students, Guidance Counselors, Child Study Teams and other interested parties as they prepare students with disabilities for the transition to higher education. These guidelines focus on identifying the components of disability documentation that are particularly useful in developing appropriate accommodation plans. The major components of quality documentation are:

1. **Documentation should be up-to-date**
 - a. Documentation should be **recent** in order to assess the current impact on academic functioning. The level of currency required for disability documentation varies dependent on condition (please see specific criteria), but in most cases should be less than 3 years old and consist of adult-normed evaluations.
 - b. While relatively recent documentation is recommended in most circumstances, common sense and discretion in accepting older documentation of conditions that are permanent or non-varying is exercised. Likewise, changing conditions and/or changes in how the condition impacts the individual brought on by growth and development may warrant more frequent updates in order to provide an accurate picture. It is important to remember that documentation is not time-bound; the need for recent documentation depends on the facts and circumstances of the individual's condition.
2. **The credentials of the evaluator(s)**
 - a. The best quality documentation is provided by a licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional who has undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, has relevant experience and has no personal relationship with the individual being evaluated. It is expected that the credentials of the person making the diagnosis correlate to the condition being reported (e.g., an orthopedic limitation might be documented by a physician, but not a licensed psychologist).
3. **A diagnostic statement identifying the disability**
 - a. Quality documentation includes a clear diagnostic statement that describes how the condition was diagnosed, provides information on the functional impact, and details the typical progression or prognosis of the condition. While diagnostic codes from the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM) or the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) of the World Health Organization are helpful in providing this information, a full clinical description will also convey the necessary information.

4. A description of the diagnostic methodology used

- a. Quality documentation includes a description of the diagnostic criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests and dates of administration, as well as a clinical narrative, observation, and specific results. Where appropriate to the nature of the disability, having both summary data and specific test scores (with the norming population identified) within the report is recommended.
- b. Diagnostic methods that are congruent with the particular disability and current professional practices in the field are recommended. Methods may include formal instruments, medical examinations, structured interview protocols, performance observations and unstructured interviews. If results from informal, non-standardized or less common methods of evaluation are reported, an explanation of their role and significance in the diagnostic process will strengthen their value in providing useful information.

5. A description of the current functional limitations

- a. Information on how the disabling condition(s) currently impacts the individual provides useful information for both establishing a disability and identifying possible accommodations. A combination of the results of formal evaluation procedures, clinical narrative, and the individual's self-report is the most comprehensive approach to fully documenting impact. The best quality documentation is thorough enough to demonstrate whether and how a major life activity is substantially limited by providing a clear sense of the severity, frequency, and pervasiveness of the condition(s).

6. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability

- a. It is helpful when documentation provides information on expected changes in the functional impact of the disability over time and context. Information on the cyclical or episodic nature of the disability and known or suspected environmental triggers to episodes provides opportunities to anticipate and plan for varying functional impacts. If the condition is not stable, information on interventions (including the individual's own strategies) for exacerbations and recommended timelines for re-evaluation are most helpful.

7. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications

- a. The most comprehensive documentation will include a description of both current and past medications, auxiliary aids, assistive devices, support services, and accommodations, including their effectiveness in enhancing functional impacts of the disability. A discussion of any significant side effects from current medications or services that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance is helpful when included in the report. While accommodations provided in another setting are not binding on the current institution, they may provide insight in making current decisions.

8. Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services

- a. Recommendations from professionals with a history of working with the individual provide valuable information for review and the planning process. It is most helpful when recommended accommodations and strategies are logically related to functional limitations; if connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of their relationship can be useful in decision-making. While the post-secondary institution has no obligation to provide or adopt recommendations made by outside entities, those that are congruent with the programs, services, and benefits offered by the college or program may be appropriate. When recommendations go beyond equitable and inclusive services and benefits, they may still be useful in suggesting alternative accommodations and/or services.

Documentation should be comprehensive, contain a diagnostic statement identifying the disability, and establish clear evidence of a significant impact on academic functioning.

Documentation should be relevant to requested accommodations.

Incomplete Documentation

If the original documentation is incomplete or inadequate to determine the extent of the disability or reasonable accommodation(s), Gulf Coast State College SAR has the discretion to require additional documentation. Gulf Coast State College SAR also reserves the right to grant or deny “provisional accommodations” pending receipt of any incomplete documentation.

Maintenance of Documentation

Gulf Coast State College SAR maintains a file containing all submitted documentation for an enrolled student throughout the student’s tenure at Gulf Coast State College. When a student separates from the college, the file will be placed in an electronic archive for 5 years, and the hard copies will be destroyed. After 5 years, a summary will be maintained and the remainder of the archived file will be destroyed.

Given limitations for storage of such files as well as the student’s potential need for the documentation in the future, it is preferable that separating students make arrangements to pick up their documentation from SAR prior to separation from the College.

Section 4: Using Accommodations and Student Accessibility Resources at Gulf Coast State College

The majority of accommodations at Gulf Coast State College are provided and/or coordinated through Student Accessibility Resources. In order to ensure that accommodations are provided in a timely and effective manner, specific procedures have been developed for the most common accommodative practices. Students should adhere to these procedures in order to request and utilize their accommodations. Students should discuss the process for coordinating non-standard accommodations (those not specifically discussed in this section), with a member of the SAR Staff.

Testing Accommodations

Accommodative testing allows the student to take his or her exam in an alternative environment, or in an alternative format. Accommodative testing does not alter the content of the exam. Students with disabilities are held to the course requirements and college's academic standards.

Procedure for Scheduling Testing Accommodations

1. Request and receive approval from SAR for testing accommodations.
2. Give his/her instructors their Faculty Notification Letter, which notifies instructors of their accommodations.
3. Register for quizzes/test/examination through RegisterBlast (<https://www.gulfcoast.edu/admissions/testing-services/register-blast/schedule-appointment.html>) **no later than 72 business hours prior to the examination date/time**. This generally should be the same day/time that the rest of the class is scheduled to take the exam, unless a mitigating circumstance (such as a class immediately following the exam time, which would preclude the student from the accommodation of extended time) occurs. In these situations, the student should collaborate with SAR staff and the instructor to work out an appropriate alternative.

***If a student is requesting to take his/her exam on a different date/time, the student must receive approval from his/her instructor. The instructor must email SAR (sar@gulfcoast.edu) and Testing Center (testingcenter@gulfcoast.edu) with specific details of the alternative testing date and/or time.**

Register Blast – How to Register for Your Test

The last testing appointment time on Mondays–Thursdays is 5:00 p.m.; Fridays, 1:00 p.m. You must schedule your exam appointment so that you can complete your exam prior to the Testing Center’s closing times. **Testing Center Hours - Mondays–Thursdays, 8:00 am – 7:00 p.m; Fridays, 8:00 am - 3:30 p.m.**

To schedule an exam appointment in Register Blast: (Subject to Change)

1. Go to the Gulf Coast State College homepage (www.gulfcoast.edu).
2. At the top of the homepage, click on the link named “Current Students.”
3. Scroll down to the “Student Accessibility Resources” link on the left side of the screen.
4. Click on the link and then click “Register Blast” from the drop down menu.
5. Click on the “Schedule Your Exam” link at the bottom of the page.
6. Select “SAR” under “Choose Your Exam Category” and select the correct date and time. Then fill out the appropriate fields.
7. Select the “Reader/Scribe” button only if you receive either of those as an accommodation and are requesting them for this test.
8. After all of the information is provided, select “Add to Cart” at the bottom of the page. If you want to add more tests, select “+ Add Another Exam.” If you are done, select “COMPLETE REGISTRATION.”
9. Once you have clicked “COMPLETE REGISTRATION,” your email confirmation receipt will appear. Print the receipt for your records.

Online Exam Accommodations

- Send the instructor an email at least two days prior to the test/quiz to remind him/her of your approved extended time. SAR has instructions on how to extend the time for online tests if the instructor is unfamiliar with how to add time to a test.
- If the online test must be proctored, follow the steps for Requesting Testing Accommodations instructions and Register Blast instructions.

Change in Date/Time of Quiz/Test/Exam

Students must take their exams during the same scheduled time of their class and cannot change the date/time without permission from their Professor. SAR is not authorized to change the date or time of a scheduled quiz/test/exam nor is the student as this violates testing and academic integrity. Professors and SAR does understand that due to time allocations, there may be some scheduling issues and therefore, students must request permission from their Professor in order to reschedule.

To request permission to change the date or time of a scheduled quiz/test/exam due to conflicts with other courses or disability, students must meet with their Professor and fill out the **“Permission to Change Date and/or Time of Quiz/Test/Exam”**. Upon completion of this form, Professors can forward the form to SAR@gulfcoast.edu and the change will be implemented. The forms can be found on the SAR Student Canvas Page, SAR website, or through the SAR office.

Students will not be permitted to take their quiz/test/exam on an alternative date or time without permission from their Professor.

Day of Exam Instructions

1. Report to the Testing Center at the scheduled time of exam. Any unexcused lateness will result in a reduction in the total amount of time allotted to complete the exam.
2. Surrender to the proctor all materials that have not been approved by the professor on the Exam Coversheet (backpacks, note-cards, watches, cell phones, etc.). Lockers are available upon request.
3. Review format of the examination with a member of the testing center staff.
4. Ask questions directly to the testing center staff. If a staff member is unable to answer questions, the staff will arrange for you to ask questions of your professor (when possible).
5. Take examination according to approved testing accommodations.
 - a. All exams will be monitored by recorded video, physical walk-through and/or observation windows.
 - b. Any student suspected of cheating will be required to stop testing. The exam and other materials will be collected by a Testing Center Staff member and the instructor will be notified immediately.
 - c. Communication to other students, leaving the testing space and frequent bathroom breaks are prohibited.
6. Return completed exam to the testing center staff. All scrap paper and worksheets must be returned with the exam.

Testing and Academic Integrity

Students registered with SAR are expected to uphold all of the college's academic integrity policies and abide by the student Academic Code of Conduct. SAR is committed to upholding these policies. Any actions that compromise academic integrity or Gulf Coast State College's Academic Code of Conduct will be referred to the professor for which the exam is being proctored. It is at the professor's discretion how to adjudicate the incident. This may include a referral to the Academic Review Board for appropriate disciplinary action. Furthermore, students who engage in acts of academic dishonesty while receiving testing accommodations through SAR risk being subjected to special test scheduling criteria in order to ensure that a one to one proctor can be present. In order to ensure the integrity of all exams and protect the reputations of students who utilize testing accommodations, the following activities may also be considered cheating:

- Possession and use of any non-approved material or device (course notes, cell phone, etc...)
- Leaving the testing location without approval
- Speaking with others besides the testing center staff, professor, or other official member of the Gulf Coast State College or SAR Staff

If a student is found to be in violation of the academic code of conduct and/or the additional provisions, the exam will be stopped and returned to the professor with a note explaining the circumstances involved to necessitate the discontinuation of proctoring. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will also be notified of the incident.

Note-taking Support

Note-taking support is provided as a means to accommodate students who, due to the impact of their disability, might otherwise miss recording important information in their notes. Notes for individual classes are generally provided in electronic format and are sent to the individual student through the department's e-mail account, SAR@gulfcoast.edu. In some cases in which it is not practical for notes to be provided in electronic format, photocopies are placed in a file on the front desk in SAR room 60. **Provision of note-taking services is not a substitution for attending class and does not excuse a student from taking their own class notes or otherwise actively participating in the class.**

Policies and Procedures for Receiving Note-taking Support

Following approval of note-taking support as a substantiated aspect of an accommodation plan, students should specifically request notes for each class in which they would like to utilize this accommodation by completing the Request for Note-Takers Form. **This step should be completed each semester.**

- Students requesting note taking support must be enrolled in the course for which the notes are being requested.
- Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis and to take notes to the best of their ability.
- Students must respond to all SAR email correspondence regarding note taking support requests. Failure to respond can delay services.
- Notes are for students' use only. They are not to be duplicated and distributed to others.
- Students should NOT ask the note taker for additional services such as tutoring.
- Students should notify SAR immediately if:
 - The student has recruited his/her own note taker.
 - The student has determined that note taking support is not needed for a particular course or if the student has withdrawn from a course for which notes were requested. Failure to notify SAR can result in suspension of your note taking support pending a meeting with the Coordinator.
 - The student has not received notes in a reasonable amount of time.

Additional Note-taking Information

Note-taking services are provided in additional formats including a device used to record lectures. Services will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will take into consideration alternate forms of note-taking including course power points and notes provided by the instructors as a form of the note-taking accommodation.

Audio Recording Policy

Students who are eligible and **have received approval from an Instructor** to audio record class lectures must agree to the following terms for Student Accessibility Resources to request this accommodation: *Students agree to abide by the policy of audio recording lectures as established by Student Accessibility Resources. 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. Following the term, students will erase recordings from all of their classes.*

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

Course Materials in Alternative Formats

Alternate Format Accommodations are provided to students who are registered with Student Accessibility Resources (SAR), have been approved for the accommodation, and have met with a member of SAR.

Students may need textbooks in alternate formats such as pdf or doc files to be used with a screen reader. The steps listed below are for requesting textbooks in alternate format.

Procedure for Requesting Course Materials in Alternative Formats

Steps for requesting Alternate Format accommodations:

1. Student must submit the **Semester Accommodation Plan each semester** to request academic accommodations.
2. Students requesting “alternate formats” must be enrolled in the course for which the material is being requested.
3. Student must attach a copy of his/her schedule to the Request for Alternate Text Form.
4. Students are required to look for an accessible format when purchasing required course textbooks prior to submitting the Alternate Format Request to SAR. If the student is unable to locate an accessible format from the publisher or the resources listed below, SAR will process the request. It is recommended that requests be submitted early since turn-around time can vary.
5. If a student is unable to obtain an accessible format, the student will submit the Alternative Format Request to SAR.
6. In order to receive alternate text materials from SAR, the student must present the original receipts for each of the instructional materials being requested (SAR will retain a copy of the receipt). Legally, we are only providing an accessible copy of material students already own.

How to receive Alternate Text:

1. Student will be contacted through GCSC e-mail by SAR once material is available (turnaround time may vary).
2. Student will bring a portable electronic storage device (such as USB drive) and SAR will download the material.
- 3.

Student Resources:

www.learningally.org

www.bookshare.org

www.coursesmart.com

Free Text-To-Speech Websites:

www.nvaccess.org

www.text2speech.org

www.ispeech.org

www.cwu.edu/central-access/reader

www.naturalreaders.com

**Copying or distribution of files obtained through SAR is strictly prohibited and these electronic files may only be used for educational purposes.

Sign Language Interpreters

Interpreting service requests must be made to the Student Accessibility Resources office, not the individual interpreters or agencies. The following are procedures for using sign language interpreting services.

Classroom Interpreters

The Semester Accommodation Plan must be submitted for interpreting services for scheduled classes. This request must be submitted at least **three weeks** prior to the start of each semester. Late requests will be filled as soon as possible, but you should be aware that at times sign-language interpreters can be difficult to secure.

- Notify SAR if there are changes to your schedule during the semester.
- Notify SAR of any problems, concerns, or needs with interpreting services. We will work with you to resolve the issue.
- Provide your interpreters with the course syllabi and other hand-outs received in class.
- Plan to arrive 15 minutes early to meet your interpreter on the first day of class.
- You and your interpreter should agree on technical or specialized sign vocabulary. If you have a specific style or sign preferences, communicate your preferences to the interpreter.
- Introduce yourself to the faculty member and explain that you are deaf or hard of hearing.
- You must be on time. The interpreter will wait outside the classroom until you arrive. The interpreter will wait 10 minutes for a one-hour class; 15 minutes for a two or more-hour class.

If the interpreter does not show up:

- Notify SAR as soon as possible. Allow 15 minutes for the interpreter to show up before contacting SAR. If after business hours, notify SAR the following morning.
- If the interpreter is late more than twice, notify SAR by email as soon as possible (SAR@gulfcoast.edu).

Do Not...

- Do not coordinate your own interpreting services. If you do, SAR will not be responsible for the cost of that service. All interpreting services must be coordinated by SAR.
- You must inform the SAR staff at least 24 hours in advance if you are unable to attend class.
- You must notify SAR as soon as you have been informed that your class has been cancelled.
- **Do not wait until the last minute to notify SAR about your absence or class cancellations.**

Role of the Interpreter

Interpreters are required to follow the GCSC Code of Ethics. They must interpret classroom lectures and activities accurately and without bias. They are not permitted to tutor, express personal opinion, or participate in the class in any way. They are not required to interpret non-class-related conversations. If you do not understand the course content, it is your responsibility to get clarification from your instructor. The Interpreter is only allowed to interpret your questions concerning exams, quizzes, or assignments to the faculty member.

Adaptive or Assistive Technology

Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, or product system used to increase, maintain, or improve access for individuals with disabilities. Student Accessibility Resources has access to an ever-changing variety of software and hardware that is available to loan to eligible students to assist them in mitigating the impact of their disability. Students should make an appointment with a member of the SAR staff in order to establish what types of technology are suitable for their individual needs.

Once specific AT components are identified that are believed to be potentially beneficial to minimizing the impact of the student's disability, the student should complete the AT Borrowing Contract. Arrangements will be made to provide the student with established components in accordance with standard equipment loan procedures. The following general policies guide the loaning of SAR equipment to students:

- Use the borrowed materials for educational and accessibility purposes only
- Items are for personal use only and may not be shared with others
- Immediately report any damage or loss material to Student Accessibility Resources; whether or not you are responsible for the damage
- Loans are for a pre-determined time period and must be returned or renewed on or before the agreed upon date

Assistive technology is a rapidly evolving field, with innovative AT solutions constantly emerging. In the effort to provide students with the most effective AT solutions, Gulf Coast State College is committed to consistently upgrading its AT resources. Please periodically check with SAR to learn about its latest improvements to Gulf Coast State College's AT resources.

Section 5: Campus Accessibility Needs

Classrooms

SAR arranges for classroom relocation for students with disabilities when appropriate.

Students must:

- Notify SAR of their classroom accessibility needs at the time of registration.
- Provide information regarding their limitations with:
 - Desks
 - Seating
 - Stairs and/or elevators
 - Specific buildings on campus

Attending Campus Events

Accommodations for campus events are coordinated primarily by the department sponsoring the event with assistance provided by SAR. Students must notify the sponsoring department of accommodations needed to attend the event (examples: sign language interpreters for a theatrical production sponsored by Gulf Coast State College)

Service Animals Policy

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are permitted in college facilities. Technically speaking, 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. Examples of the functions of services animals 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. Therapy or companion animals are not service animals and are not covered under the ADA. To work 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 clearly identifies its working status. Service animals whose behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others may be excluded regardless of training or certification.

Students and campus personnel should not prevent a Service Animal from accompanying its owner, except where specifically prohibited. Students and campus personnel should not attempt to pet, feed, or distract a Service Animal, as they are working companions.

Support Animals Policy

Support Animals provide therapeutic support to individuals with an identified disability and are not trained to assist an individual with activities of daily living, therefore they are not considered Service Animals and do not qualify for the legal protection under ADA. Every attempt will be made by the College to ensure College policies adjust as changes in the laws may occur. Requests for Support Animals are reviewed on a case by case basis.

Section 6: Advocacy

Talking to Your Professors

Although there are more students with disabilities in postsecondary education today than ever before, it is very possible that there are situations in which the college instructors have had little prior experience with students with disabilities. Also, the student may have difficulty advocating for himself/herself or to express his/her needs.

SAR recommends the following strategies to use when talking to your professors for the first time about your disability and need for accommodations:

- Be prepared! Practice what you are going to say and be prepared to discuss your abilities (and your disabilities) as well as accommodations you are requesting.
- Don't procrastinate! Make an appointment to talk with your instructor(s) within the first two weeks of each semester. Adjustments and accommodations need to be planned as early as possible, especially when it involves testing accommodations.
- Take it with you! Bring your Accommodation Letter from SAR. Remember the Accommodation Letter verifies your need for accommodations and your registration with SAR. **YOU must request these letters at the beginning of each semester.**
- Problems? When problems arise, contact the Assistant Coordinator or Coordinator of SAR as soon as possible. In most situations, you and the instructor will work out the provision of accommodations in a way that is agreeable to all parties involved. If you have difficulties working this out, contact SAR.

10 Tips for Self-Advocacy

1. Know and understand your rights and responsibilities.
2. Ask questions whenever you need clarification.
3. Repeat a question until it is satisfactorily answered.
4. Keep a "paper trail" of all written communication regarding your education, it is appropriate to request copies of all records and documentation.
5. Remember that you are an equal partner in your education.
6. Let people know that you intend to work to resolve issues.
7. Learn all you can about your disability: needs, strengths, and weaknesses.
8. Know what resources are available and use them.
9. Know who the key people are. Find the right person with whom to talk, and try all avenues.
10. Praise and thank people when appropriate.

Section 7: Confidentiality, Appeals, and Grievance Procedures

Policy on Confidentiality

General Rule

The Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) regulates disclosure of disability documentation and records maintained by SAR. SAR requires prior written consent by the student before SAR may release disability documentation or records to any third party.

Exception to the Rule

Under FERPA, SAR is permitted to release information to any school official who has a "legitimate educational interest."

What Does this Mean?

Professors or other school officials, such as tutors, may request information about the impact of a student's disability on their ability to learn. SAR will only share information with other school officials when appropriate and will carefully balance a student's request for confidentiality and the request for additional, relevant information about the student. SAR seeks to preserve the student's wish to keep their disability information and status confidential.

Other Students' Rights under FERPA

FERPA also allows students to inspect and review their files maintained by SAR. Students have the right to challenge any information contained in the files that is incorrect or misleading and request an amendment to this misinformation.

GCSC Appeals Process and Grievance Procedures for Alleged Discrimination

Timeliness in reporting incidents of discrimination is essential for the protection of individual rights. For this reason, such incidents should be reported as soon as possible, but within 60 days of the occurrence.

The Executive Director of Human Resources has been designated to coordinate compliance with non-discrimination requirements and handle all claims alleging discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct and serves as the college's equity officer. This includes complaints alleging any action prohibited by the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability by Gulf Coast State College may file complaints pursuant to the following procedure. Inquiries may be made with the Executive Director of Human Resources at 850-872-3866, 5230 West U.S. Highway 98, Panama City, FL 32401.

All reported incidents will receive a prompt and equitable investigation and complainants will be ensured due process as applicable under State and Federal guidelines. The college will inform the complainant, in writing, of the outcome of the investigation and in the event the college is found at fault in a discriminatory investigation, corrective action will be taken to prohibit such discrimination in the future.

Student and Applicant for Admissions Reporting Procedures

- A. Students who believe they are victims of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct may report the facts and circumstances to a college official or the Vice President of Student Affairs, as a first report of an incident. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, he or she may report the complaint to the Executive Director of Human Resources. A copy of the initial report will be hand-delivered to the president within 2 working days.
- B. The initial report may be made either verbally or in writing. If verbal, the college official, other than the vice president, receiving the report will make a written record of the alleged incident. If the report is written, it must be signed. The college official, other than the vice president, who receives the student's initial report, will hand deliver the complaint to the Vice President of Student Affairs, as a first report of the incident. The aim of the first report of an incident is to ensure that the alleged harassing and/or discriminatory conduct ceases and that the matter is resolved on an informal basis.
- C. If the informal investigation of the facts and circumstances fails to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the student complainant, a formal written complaint setting forth the facts and circumstances of the alleged discrimination may be filed by the student with the Executive Director of Human Resources who will conduct a further formal investigation within 30 days of receipt of the complaint.
- D. At the conclusion of the formal investigation, a written summary report, including appropriate recommendations, will be made to the president. When warranted, disciplinary action may be taken against any person who violates this policy; or other actions may be taken by the college to ensure non-discrimination in the future. The student will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

Alternative Remedies

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

Atlanta Office (Florida's Local Office)
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
61 Forsyth St. S.W., Suite 19T10
Atlanta, GA 30303-8927
Telephone: 404-974-9406
FAX: 404-974-9471; TDD: 800-877-8339
Email: OCR.Atlanta@ed.gov

Section 8: Community Resources for People with Disabilities

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Florida Department of Education

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a federal-state program that helps people who have physical or mental disabilities get or keep a job. VR is committed to helping people with disabilities find meaningful careers.

Eligible students may receive the following services from VR:

- Medical and Psychological Assessment
- Vocational Evaluation and Planning
- Career Counseling and Guidance
- Training and Education After High School
- Job-Site Assessment and Accommodations
- Job Placement
- Job Coaching
- On-the-Job Training
- Supported Employment
- Assistive Technology and Devices
- Time-Limited Medical and/or Psychological Treatment

For more information please go to <http://www.rehabworks.org/>.

Life Management Center of Northwest Florida

In operation since 1954, Life Management Center provides comprehensive behavioral health and family counseling services in Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, and Washington counties in the Florida Panhandle. We offer objective, professional help with personal problems ranging from family life adjustment difficulties to stress reactions, substance abuse, and mental illness

How to get services: In Bay County, call 850-522-4485 for an appointment or for emergency mental health services and evaluations. In Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, and Washington Counties, call Toll-free 888-785-8750. Emergency mental health services are available 24-hours a day.

Fees: Insurance Coverage, Medicare or Medicaid, and sliding fee scale available based on individual need.

For more information please go to http://lifemanagementcenter.org/contact_us.php.

Disability Resource Center

Disability Services Resource Center (DSRC), formally known as the Bay County Society for Crippled Children and Adults, was founded in 1933 and is dedicated to helping people with disabilities. Their mission is to serve individuals who are temporary and permanently disabled by helping them retain and/or become part of their community to the fullest extent of their abilities. They believe that all people, regardless of their ability or disability, should have the opportunity to experience the rich rewards of daily living.

Disability Services Resource Center operates:

- Camping for Children and Adults
- Disability Awareness Training
- Ramp Building
- Durable Medical Goods Loan Closet
- Adaptive Sports and Athletic Events

For more information please go to <http://www.dsrbcc.com/>

Division of Blind Services

The Florida Division of Blind Services helps blind and visually impaired individuals achieve their goals and live their lives with as much independence and self-direction as possible.

Types of Services Offered:

- School-to-Work Program
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Rehabilitation Center
- Business Enterprises Program
- Independent Living Program

For more information, please go to <http://dbs.myflorida.com/>

FSU Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (FSU-CARD)

The FSU CARD serves 18 counties in the panhandle of Florida with offices in Tallahassee, Panama City, and Pensacola. CARD has extensive experience serving individuals with ASD and provides direct services for communication, social, and behavior problems, as well as provides information, consultation, and technical assistance to families and professionals associated with CARD clients. The Center also offers partnerships to professionals and pre-professionals who serve, or are preparing to serve, the client population. CARD-FSU currently serves over 4,000 individuals ranging from infancy to adulthood and has excellent working relationships with the early intervention system, school system, and healthcare providers in the 18-county catchment area and the network of 7 CARD sites across the state of Florida.

For more information, please go to <http://fsucard.com>

Additional resources are available both on campus and in the community. For additional resources or information, please contact SAR.

