Introduction

The University of Southern Mississippi provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities through the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA). ODA verifies eligibility for accommodations and works with eligible students to develop and coordinate plans to provide accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are offered in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

At Southern Miss, ODA falls organizationally under the dean of students, who reports to the vice president for Student Affairs. The ADA Committee, with faculty, staff and student representation, serves in a liaison and advisory capacity to ODA. The committee provides input and direction to ODA operations, and its members support ODA activities within their respective units.

ODA is committed to creating a welcoming campus environment where students with disabilities are encouraged to pursue careers on the basis of personal interest and ability. ODA is a non-fee generating program designed to meet the unique needs of Southern Miss students with disabilities.

The ODA Staff

The ODA professional staff, director, assistant director and disability specialist are responsible for overseeing ODA’s activities. Suzy Hebert is the director. The office is located in Southern Miss’s Hattiesburg’s campus in Bond Hall, Room 114. The mailing address is ODA; Southern Miss; 118 College Drive #8586; Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001. ODA’s office staff can be reached by phone at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232. Students with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the Mississippi Relay Service at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or e-mail Suzy Hebert at Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu. For up-to-date information and technical assistance, visit ODA’s Web site at http://www.usm.edu/oda.

The ADA compliance officer is responsible for ensuring that the university complies with federal regulations that guarantee individuals with disabilities equal access to all facilities, programs and services. Students, university employees or visitors may contact the office for clarification of federal regulations or the grievance procedure. Information on the grievance procedures can be found in the Procedures section of the ODA manual.
Serving Students and Southern Miss’s Campuses

ODA works with students enrolled in all Southern Miss courses and teaching sites. Requests for accommodations in online classes or for courses at distant teaching sites can be made easily by phone or e-mail. Further, with advance notice, ODA is willing to meet students on any Southern Miss campus.

Eligibility

Eligible students include those enrolled in Southern Miss’s degree and non-degree programs and are considered qualified to meet all university program requirements despite a disability, and meet the definition of disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA. The definition of disability includes any person who “. . . has a physical, emotional, or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of life’s major activities; has a record of disability or is regarded as having a disability” (P.L. 101-136). Documentation of a disability must substantiate significant limitations in a major life activity so we can determine how that limitation impacts living, working or learning at Southern Miss. Students with disabilities who choose not to register with ODA may not receive academic accommodations. In determining if a student is qualified to meet all program requirements, the university must base its decision on the skills, interests and aptitudes of a student and not on presumptions that would arbitrarily exclude a student from participation in a program or activity.

ODA Accommodations and Services

Toward the goal of equal access for all students, the university strives to remove structural and programmatic barriers. The faculty and staff of Southern Miss are receptive to the needs of students with disabilities. Cooperation and coordination between ODA and Southern Miss’s faculty and staff enhance the success of the total program. Services and reasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- Letters to instructors requesting accommodations such as note takers, use of tape recorders in class, extended testing time, alternate test formats and enlarged print
- Document conversion (enlarged font, audiotape, electronic files or braille)
- Assistance in obtaining materials from Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic
- Exam modifications (extended time, minimal distraction environment, readers or scribes)
- Information coordination and appropriate referrals off campus
- Referral to other campus services (Career Services, Counseling Center, Student Support Services and Library Services)
• Liaison services for qualified students with faculty and staff
• Training and technical assistance on disability-related issues with faculty and staff
• Liaison services with rehabilitation agencies
• Liaison services with university offices regarding campus orientation, technology, admissions, registration, food services and housing
• Sign-language interpreters, note takers and readers
• Accessible classroom, location and furniture
• Resource center for disability information and publications

Accommodations are designed to meet the individual needs of each student and are therefore planned and implemented in conjunction with the student’s documented disability. The university may refuse a request for an unreasonable accommodation or for any adjustment, auxiliary aid or service that imposes a fundamental alteration on a program or activity of the university. **Post-secondary institutions are not required to provide services of a personal nature, such as personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, transportation, readers for personal use or tutors for study.**

The appropriateness of accommodations is determined within the context of a curriculum and the way in which a specific disability interferes within the given context. For this reason, students should be aware that all of their “approved accommodations” may not be suitable for all classes and that accommodations may change depending on the structure of a course or curriculum.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations provide instructors with ODA accommodation letters. **Otherwise, without accommodation letters, instructors will not provide accommodations.** A sample accommodation letter can be found in Appendix B of the ODA Manual. Accommodations are not implemented retro-actively. Rather, they are enacted after the student delivers an accommodation letter.

**Work Accommodations**

**Employees, faculty or staff** requesting work accommodations should contact Linda Rasmussen, director of Human Resources, at 601.266.4050 or linda.rasmussen@usm.edu.

**Student workers** requesting work accommodations should contact the ODA director or assistant director at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232.

**Disability Training and Technical Assistance**

ODA provides disability training and technical assistance to faculty, staff and students. Information relating to the university’s responsibilities in accommodating
students with disabilities and how to implement those accommodations is routinely offered. When faculty or staff face challenges in providing academic adjustments or accommodations, ODA can assist. Upon request, training for using the university’s assistive technology is provided. ODA frequently acts as a guest speaker in courses, departments and groups discussing issues related to disability sensitivity. Upon request, ODA shares information on specific disabilities and about community resources that may benefit persons with disabilities.

Technology Access

Internet usage has been steadily increasing and will continue to expand. This growing reliance on the Web and other information technologies can create difficulties for persons with disabilities, who may access traditional information sources in an alternative manner. For example, some with visual impairments may use screen readers or audio tracks to read print. Or persons with hearing impairments may depend on closed captioning to follow dialogues in movies or presentations. With the variety of mediums frequently used on the Web, considerations must be given to access for persons with disabilities. To ensure equal access to Southern Miss’s services, programs and activities, the university is committed to adapting to the ways that users access materials and information. Therefore, in the procurement, development and maintenance of information technology and services for persons with disabilities, the university strives to meet the accessibility standards specified by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines” from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), appropriately tailored to the specific circumstances of the university.
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Procedures for Acquiring Accommodations

To receive reasonable accommodations for a disability, students must “self-identify,” which involves registering with ODA, making accommodation requests to ODA, then delivering the ODA accommodation letters to instructors. Accommodations will not be provided without this letter. Steps involved in registering with ODA and accommodation procedures are described in detail.

Step 1: Registering with ODA: Application and Documentation

Students requesting disability accommodations must complete an ODA Application and provide documentation of the disability. Documentation submitted to ODA must be from an appropriate licensed or certified professional with expertise related to a student’s disability. It must include a statement explaining how the disability, with or without mitigating circumstances, limits a major life area and participation in courses, programs, services, or activities. Documentation must be current and contain a clear statement of the diagnosis and disability’s impact as it relates to the requested accommodations. ODA does not assist students in obtaining documentation, nor does ODA refer students for eligibility evaluations. Students requesting names of professionals who can perform evaluations and provide documentation are given a list of appropriate community agencies and professionals. All fees related to procuring documentation are the responsibility of the student.

ODA staff are responsible for reviewing and approving the application and documentation. At times, the university relies on consultants (qualified professionals) to review questionable documentation to assure that such documentation meets Section 504 and ADA disability criteria. Once the application and documentation are approved, ODA contacts the student to inform that he or she is registered with ODA and offers to schedule the initial accommodation meeting.

Step 2: Accommodation Meetings

In the initial accommodation meeting, the student identifies his or her needs and makes accommodation requests. To be approved, accommodation requests must be appropriate for the student’s disability and supported by the disability documentation. ODA may perform a substantive review of requested accommodations and explore reasonable alternatives to the requested accommodations.
Each semester, accommodation plans are reviewed and updated; therefore, prior to the semester start and after registering for classes, students should contact ODA staff to request accommodations. Changes in class schedules or in the implementation of the approved accommodations must be reported to ODA by the student receiving the accommodation. Accommodation requests should be made in advance to allow preparation time to prepare for implementation. Students registered with ODA should not have others make requests on their behalf.

**Step 3: Students Deliver Accommodation Letters to Instructors**

Once accommodations are approved, ODA prepares letters that students hand-deliver to their instructors describing the accommodations. The letters describe the approved accommodations and how they are to be implemented. **Unless special arrangements have been made, students are responsible for picking up and delivering their accommodation letters to instructors.** For their own personal record, students receive a copy of their letter. It is recommended that students deliver letters to instructors during the first week of class, rather than waiting until they need the accommodation. Further, students should make an appointment or visit instructors during their office hours to review their letters in private.

**Accommodation Considerations**

**Online Courses and Distant Teaching Sites**

Students in online courses or at distant teaching sites should follow the same procedures to register with ODA and request accommodations. Since students enrolled in these courses are likely to be located at a distance from the Hattiesburg campus, they can easily communicate with ODA by calling or scheduling phone conferences. Further, with advance notice, ODA can meet students at the various Southern Miss teaching sites. As needed, ODA mails information, accommodation letters or other related materials to students. Students who are distant from an instructor can request that ODA deliver the accommodation letters. In all Southern Miss’s courses, **it is the students’ responsibility to immediately report to ODA any accommodation problems or challenges in the accommodation process.** Upon hearing students’ accommodation concerns or problems, ODA will quickly address the situation.

**Temporary Illnesses or Injuries**

Students with temporary illnesses or injuries may not be eligible for formal accommodations with the ODA. However, as a courtesy, ODA will provide assistance with note-taker paper, exams or accessible classroom furniture.
Requests for **Excused Absences and Emergency Notification at the University** are referred to the Office for Student-Oriented Services. For more information, please contact Alfreda Horton at 601.266.4025 or email address, alfreda.horton@usm.edu.

**Reasonable and Unreasonable Accommodations**

Students should keep in mind that the approved accommodation may not be suitable for all courses. The appropriateness of accommodations is determined within the context of a curriculum and the way in which a specific disability interferes within the given context. Accommodations may change depending on the course structure. For example, if class methodology or teaching structure does not lend itself to note-taking, then a note-taker may not be reasonable.

Any request that imposes a fundamental alteration may be refused. Reasonable accommodations are designed to ensure that students have equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to students without disabilities. Students are responsible for procuring or paying for services related to personal use and study.

**Personal Services**

Institutions are not required to provide services of a personal nature such as personal attendants, individually prescribed devices (eye glasses, wheelchairs, hearing aids), transportation, or readers/tutors for personal use or study.

**Accommodation Problems**

Students are expected to maintain contact with the ODA director or assistant director. If the approved accommodations are not implemented in a satisfactory manner, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the ODA director, assistant director or disability specialist of the problem. As soon as possible, faculty and staff should report to ODA any problems with approved accommodations.

**Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Students with disabilities covered under ADA have a right to:

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, activities and facilities offered by the university
- An equal opportunity to work and learn, and to receive reasonable accommodation, auxiliary aids and services
- Privacy of all information regarding their disability, except disclosures as required or permitted by law
Students with disabilities covered under ADA have the responsibility to:

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, activities and facilities
- Self-identify disability status to ODA by providing current documentation of a disability from an appropriately certified or licensed professional, requesting specific accommodations that are appropriate for the disability, and allowing for a reasonable amount of time for accommodation preparation and implementation
- Follow procedures outlined by ODA
- Maintain reasonable contact with ODA staff. If approved accommodations are not implemented in a satisfactory manner, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the ODA professional staff as soon as possible

University Responsibility

Under the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA, Institutions of Higher Learning must provide reasonable accommodations that afford equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Section 504 states that “...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 in, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Under the Provisions of Section 504, The University of Southern Mississippi ... may not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students. Students who have self-identified, provided documentation of disability, and requested reasonable accommodations related to their specific disability are entitled to receive the following: information in accessible formats upon request, approved modifications of programs, appropriate academic adjustments or auxiliary aids that enable them to participate in and benefit from all educational programs and activities in the most integrated and appropriate settings. Section 504 does not compel educational institutions to disregard the disabilities of individuals or to make substantial modifications in programs to allow individuals with disabilities to participate. Academic requirements that are essential to the program of instruction being pursued by a student or any directly related licensing requirements are not regarded as discriminatory, even if they have an adverse effect on individuals with disabilities. Thus, academic requirements may not serve as barriers to equal opportunity, unless they are deemed essential to a degree program or licensing process.

According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA, institutions should make reasonable accommodations so that no student with a disability is denied the benefits or excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to
discrimination under any of its education programs or activities because of an absence of educational auxiliary aids.Auxiliary aids include, but are not limited to typed texts, lecture notes, film transcriptions, interpreters, readers or alternate format of materials, and adapted classroom equipment.

ADA Syllabus Statement

University instructors are to include the approved Southern Miss ADA syllabus statement on course syllabi. This statement provides information about who to contact for requesting accommodations. The wording in this statement should not be changed and it should be printed as:

If a student has a disability that qualifies under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies.

Address:
The University of Southern Mississippi
Office for Disability Accommodations
118 College Drive # 8586
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Voice Telephone: 601.266.5024 or 228. 214.3232 Fax: 601. 266.6035
Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the Mississippi Relay Service at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or e-mail Suzy Hebert at Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu.

Accessible Course Materials

To comply with disability laws that mandate equal access for students with disabilities, the university and instructors are required to make all course materials accessible, including text books, articles, videos, exams, power points or other forms of classroom presentations. The format of materials needed to make the materials accessible will depend on the nature of a student’s disability. For guidance in determining how to ensure that all teaching materials are accessible, call ODA at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232.

Course Reading Materials

Instructors or their academic departments are expected to provide advance notice of their course textbooks and readings so ODA will have sufficient time to convert these
materials to usable format. These document conversion processes are time consuming and usually involve communication with textbook publishers. Therefore, if ODA does not have this information in a timely manner then the student with a disability will not have the needed course materials at the start of the semester as other students would. For more information on ODA’s Document Conversion services for students with disabilities, please call the ODA Technology Specialist at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232.

Course Handouts, Exams, Syllabi

Instructors needing assistance to ensure that all handouts, syllabi or exams are accessible (brailled, enlarged, e-text, etc.) should contact ODA ahead of time at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232.

Multimedia Presentations

To provide equal access of information when using multimedia presentations in courses, instructors are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Multimedia presentations, including movies, must have synchronized captioning or synchronized transcripts readily available
- Audio presentations must have transcripts readily available
- Audio tracks explaining important visual information must be readily available for multimedia presentations

Accessible Web Sites

Southern Miss’s colleges, departments, programs and instructors should strive to make all Web pages accessible. The growing reliance on the Web and other information technologies can create difficulties for persons with disabilities, who may access traditional information sources in alternative manner. For example, some with visual impairments may use screen readers or audio tracks to read print. Or persons with hearing impairments may depend on closed captioning to follow dialogues in movies or presentations. With the variety of mediums frequently used on the Web, considerations must be given to access for persons with disabilities. For guidelines on creating accessible Web pages, refer to the Designing Accessible Web Site Tipsheet in Appendix C of the ODA Manual.

Access Statements for Events, Web Pages and Publications

To promote disability access, colleges, departments and programs are asked to include statements about the availability of assistance on their materials and promotional items. Providing information about how to request accommodations creates a welcoming environment for persons with disabilities. The advance notice of participants’ needs
makes it easier to plan and implement accommodations. If you are not sure about how to respond to questions about accommodations or accessibility, contact ODA’s director or assistant director at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232.

Below are three model statements that are designed for use in literature for events, on Web pages or on publications. You should be able to adapt one for almost any situation. However, if you have questions, contact the ODA director or assistant director. Note that these statements are not intended to replace the approved ADA Syllabus Statement that should be included on all course syllabi.

For Events (To appear on brochures, flyers, posters and other announcements for events such as workshops, seminars, organizational meetings, sporting events, camps, etc.):

"If special assistance or auxiliary aids are needed to accommodate a disability, please contact {insert name and contact information} to discuss accommodations at least one week prior to {the event}.

On Web Pages (To appear as text on Web pages if you are not sure of usability):

"If you have difficulty accessing any portions of this Web site with adaptive technology, please contact {insert web site owner’s name and contact information}.

On Publications (To appear on catalogs, brochures and other University publications):

"If you need to request this information in an alternate format, such as electronic file, large print, audio or braille, please contact {insert name and contact information}.

Privacy Protection Practices

ODA respects students’ privacy and strives to keep information related to students’ disability documentation confidential. Communication with other campus offices or instructors is limited to providing guidance on how to implement approved accommodations. Students registering with ODA must sign a Consent Form (see Appendix B in ODA Manual). Students 18 years of age and older are considered adults and must act on their own accord. With a student’s permission or request, ODA will consult with parents, faculty, staff and relevant professionals. ODA does not disclose information about a student’s disability or the nature of the disability unless the student specifically requests ODA to do so and signs a Release of Information Form (see Appendix B). Students’ records may, however, be disclosed where permitted or required by law. Student records are kept in locked file cabinets, where only authorized ODA personnel have access. For more information on ODA’s procedures to protect
students’ privacy, see the outline of ODA’s Privacy Procedures in Appendix B of this manual.

**Shared Responsibilities: ODA, Faculty, Staff and Students**

Achieving reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities involves shared responsibility between ODA, students, faculty and staff. It is the university’s responsibility to educate personnel and faculty regarding the rights of students with disabilities and ODA policies.

**Faculty and Staff Responsibilities:**

- Provide reasonable accommodations as outlined in the ODA accommodation letters
- Refer students to ODA when students request accommodations without an ODA letter
- Inform ODA as soon as possible about any accommodation problems
- Include the approved ADA Syllabus Statement on all Southern Miss course syllabi
- Take steps to protect students’ privacy relating to disability status and accommodations

**Student Follow-up and Evaluation of Services**

Usually in the middle of a semester, ODA contacts students to ensure that accommodations are being implemented properly. At the end of each semester, students are asked to evaluate services provided by ODA by completing a satisfaction with services questionnaire (see the ODA Evaluation of Services form in Appendix B of the ODA Manual).

**Students are responsible for keeping ODA updated with their current contact information.** If the need arises for ODA to quickly relay messages, having accurate phone numbers, mailing or e-mail addresses is essential.

**Grievances**

Southern Miss is committed to providing prompt and effective resolution of alleged incidents of discrimination and harassment. The university encourages informal resolution of discrimination complaints as close to the source as possible. Students who believe they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment may file formal grievances in accordance with the policies and procedures of Southern Miss.
When a student’s request for disability accommodations or auxiliary aids is denied, students should first express their concerns to the ODA director. If a student wishes to file a formal complaint against a university employee for discrimination or harassment, they should contact Dr. Rebecca Woodrick in the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity at 601.266.6618 or visit McLemore Hall, Room 310. University procedures for the Resolution of Discrimination Complaints can be found in Appendix A of this manual. **Students have the right to file complaints with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR); however, OCR will not investigate a complaint until the university’s internal grievance procedure is complete.** OCR’s contact information is:

Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620  
Dallas, TX 75201  
Voice Phone: 214.661.9600; Fax: 214.661.9587; TTY Relay: 1.800.676.3777
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Academic Advising

Students must contact the department of their scholastic major for advising information. ODA does not provide academic advising to students with disabilities. Because of regulations governing privacy, academic advisors will not be notified by this office of the names of students with disabilities. If a student believes that his or her disability should be considered while arranging course schedules, that student should disclose the disability to the academic advisor.

Students with disabilities are subject to the same process for scheduling advisor appointments as are other students. It is the responsibility of the student to make adviser appointments early enough that they may benefit from early registration on SOAR.

Academic Probation/Suspension

Students requiring additional information about appealing academic decisions should contact the department of their scholastic major.

Accessible Facilities

The university strives to maintain a fully accessible campus to ensure program access. **Students who have difficulty accessing classrooms or other campus locations should inform ODA as soon as the problem arises.** Courses, programs and activities in rooms that are not accessible to a participating student with a disability will be promptly reassigned to an accessible location.

Accessible Furniture

Accessible furniture, including adjustable tables and desks, should be specifically requested through ODA by the student needing these accommodations. **All requests should be made to ODA in advance,** with students informing ODA of the classroom location and meeting times. Students must make this furniture request each semester and should inform ODA of any changes in their schedules or in the location of their classes.
Admission Requirements

Southern Miss does not have a separate set of admission criteria for students who have disabilities. Students seeking additional information about the admission’s process should contact the Admissions Office at 601.266.5000.

Alternate Format of Books and Information

Students requiring alternate format to access books, literature, and information must inform ODA in advance of their need, as the university requires a reasonable amount of time to obtain and convert the information into a usable form. All students receiving Document Conversion services must complete a Document Conversion Use Agreement form. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix B of the ODA Manual.

Textbooks are available in alternate formats through Learning Ally, Bookshare.org or textbook publishers, or can be converted by ODA. Students who use alternate formats of textbooks or reading materials should preregister and inform ODA of their schedule.

Students receiving notes from note-takers that will require conversion into an alternate format should inform ODA of this need and make plans on how the notes will be forwarded to or from ODA. For more information on note-takers, refer to Note-Takers in this section.

Instructors needing assistance to ensure that course materials are accessible (brailled, enlarged, e-text, etc) should contact ODA ahead of time. Guidance will be provided for the reformatting or conversion of materials.

Delaying Due Dates

Students are expected to carefully study the syllabi for each course at the beginning of the semester and use good time management and study skills to avoid requests for delays. Requests for delaying due dates for course projects or papers will be evaluated on a case by case basis and only if the disability warrants the accommodation. However, there is no guarantee that due dates can be delayed. For consideration of such a request, students may be asked to obtain written information from a qualified health care provider supporting the request. In considering the request for delaying paper’s or project’s due dates, input from the instructor or head of the academic department is taken into account. When flexibility is given, it is done in a reasonable manner with a limit on the time extension granted.
Exam Modifications

Accommodations involving exam modifications include, but are not limited to, extended test-taking time, use of assistive technology, minimal distraction testing environment, oral examinations, use of readers and scribes. If an instructor is unable to provide exam accommodations, ODA can assist. Before taking exams at ODA, students must sign a Student Testing Guidelines form. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix B of the ODA Manual.

Procedures For Obtaining Exam Accommodations:

1. Students deliver the accommodation letter to the instructor
2. Instructors determine if they can implement the exam accommodations.
3. If an instructor is unable to provide the accommodation, ODA can administer the exam. However, the student’s schedule of other classes and ODA’s schedule may result in exams being administered on an alternate day or an alternate time.

To Take Exams with ODA:

Students sign a Student Testing Guidelines form. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix B of the ODA Manual.

Students are encouraged to contact ODA five working days before the test to schedule the testing time, which is the same day and time as the class. Students should remind instructors that it will be taken with ODA.

Instructors complete a Testing Instructions form (see Appendix B) for each exam that is forwarded to ODA. If the exam is not accompanied by a completed Testing Instruction form, then it may not be administered by ODA.

Students must arrive at ODA at the scheduled exam time. If a student is more than 15 minutes late for an exam, it may be regarded as a missed exam that may be rescheduled in accordance with ODA’s exam rescheduling procedures.

To reschedule an exam with ODA, students may be asked to provide proof, written documentation, from an appropriate professional, of extenuating circumstances. ODA reserves the right to contact the professional to verify the situation and make a judgement about rescheduling with ODA. Exams must be taken by date given on the Testing Instruction form or obtain the instructor’s approval to take it later. If permission to postpone the exam is granted, then the student is responsible for having the instructor inform ODA of his or her approval. The student must also contact ODA to schedule another exam time.

If academic dishonesty is suspected, it will be investigated immediately. Mirrors, video cameras and observation may be used. Personal belongings (cell phones, books,
purses, book bags, computers or other electronic devices) will not be allowed in the testing room unless specified on the Testing Instructions form that is completed by the instructor.

**Excused Absences**

At Southern Miss, instructors are allowed to set attendance policies, which are usually stated in course syllabi. Instructors have the right to follow their policies and respond to absences accordingly. Students with chronic illnesses can request flexibility in attendance. However, ODA cannot demand that instructors excuse illness related absences. When attendance is considered an essential part of a course, flexibility of the attendance policy can be denied. To determine if attendance is necessary, the following may be considered:

- Is the class participatory or interactive?
- Is participation part of the grade?
- Is in-class work assigned and due before the end of the class period?
- Is group work integral to the class?

Requests for excused absences are handled on a case by case basis and students may be asked to provide written information from a qualified health care provider explaining the absence. In considering the request for excused absences, ODA may seek input from the instructor or head of the academic department. **When flexibility is granted, it is done for only a reasonable number of absences.** If absences occur on days of quizzes or exams, the exam make-up policy stated in the syllabus will apply.

Students likely to have disability related absences, can ask ODA to include a statement in their accommodation letters alerting instructors of this possibility. By doing this at the start of a semester or before an absence, instructors are advised that a legitimate, disability-related reason may cause the student to miss class.

The Office of Student-Oriented Services can also verify absences. For more information, please contact Alfreda Horton at 601.266.4025 or email, alfreda.horton@usm.edu.

**Funding Opportunities**

Students with disabilities who may require additional funding or support sources in order to attend school are encouraged to investigate the options below.

**Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services** is a federal/state program which provides individualized support services and funding to qualified people with disabilities in order to assist them in becoming self-sufficient and self-supporting. Interested students should contact the Office of Rehabilitation Services for information regarding criteria and the application process or can visit the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services’ Web site [www.mdrs.state.ms.us](http://www.mdrs.state.ms.us). Students may contact the
Vocational Rehabilitation office in Hattiesburg, Miss. at 601.545.5619 or they may contact their state office. Contact information for each state's Department of Rehabilitation Services office by visiting the Job Accommodations Network website at askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902.

The World Wide Web offers countless opportunities to research possible funding sources. A good place to start is the DO-IT Web site at www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/financial-aid.html.

**GRE, PRAXIS, GMAT Accommodations**

For students registered with ODA, this office can complete the relevant sections of accommodation applications for standardized tests which may be necessary for graduate education or professional certification. However, it cannot guarantee that the testing agency in question will provide the requested accommodations. **Students should be aware that the documentation they submitted for accommodations through ODA may not be sufficient to qualify for accommodations on some standardized exams.** Further, students should not expect to be eligible for an accommodation for standardized exams if they did not receive the same accommodation while they were served by ODA. Long before it becomes necessary to take one of these exams, students should research eligibility guidelines in order to avoid the last-minute denial of accommodations. To receive this assistance from ODA, the student must make the request **in a timely manner.** ODA recommends that students call ODA to schedule an appointment. ODA cannot help a student if the student fails to meet the application deadline.

**Handicap Parking**

Students with handicap parking placards or tags may park in any campus **handicap parking space or legal parking space, excluding fire lanes, no parking zones, reserved parking areas, service zones, and in front of handicap curb cuts.** Metered parking spaces are available at various locations on campus, but all students who use these spaces must insert the proper amount of money in the meter or they may receive a ticket.

All university students and employees parking on campus, including those who use handicap placards or tags, must obtain a Southern Miss parking decal by registering with the Department of Parking Management, located on the first floor of McLemore Hall. When students use campus handicap parking spaces without a visible Southern Miss handicap parking decal or a state handicap placard or tag, they are **at risk for receiving a parking ticket and having their cars towed.** For more information on parking on Southern Miss’s campus, visit [http://www.usm.edu/parking/](http://www.usm.edu/parking/).
High School and College Differences

Due to the differences in the disability laws that govern high school and college, students entering college should not expect to receive the same accommodations or assistance that they experienced in high school. In high school, education is a right that must be provided to all students in appropriate environments. However, in the college setting, it is not. To gain entry into college, students must meet the school’s admission criteria. High school districts are responsible for identifying students’ disabilities, providing free testing and evaluations along with offering transportation to the educational programs. Whereas, colleges are not required to give this assistance. For more information on the differences between college and high school, visit http://www.mississippi.edu/thinkhigherms/disability-accomodations.php and http://www.mississippi.edu/thinkhigherms/disability-difference.php.

Housing Accommodations

Physically accessible housing facilities for students with disabilities are available at Southern Miss. Students with special needs for housing should identify and request these needs on their housing application.

Applications to university housing are processed by date of receipt of the housing application and receipt of application fees. Therefore, it is important to submit the housing application prior to or by the priority deadline as stated on the housing application. Submission of a housing application does not guarantee on-campus housing. Room or housing assignments are based on space availability.

Students requiring the service of a personal care attendant may note this requirement and the attendant’s name on their application. Students may request the attendant as a roommate. There is a residence room charge for attendants.

The Department of Residence Life offices are located on the first floor of Hickman Hall; the telephone number is 601.266.4783 and e-mail address is reslife@usm.edu. For more information, visit www.usm.edu/reslife.

IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) or 504 Plan

While an IEP or a 504 Plan from a student's high school can be helpful in showing what accommodations a student received in the past, it is not sufficient documentation to determine a student's eligibility for accommodations at the college level. For more information on documentation required to verify disability status, please refer to the documentation guidelines.
Interpreters

Upon request, interpreting services are provided for students with supporting documentation. **Procedures For Obtaining Interpreting Services:**

1. Students with hearing disabilities make requests to ODA for interpreters. When requesting, the students provide ODA with the exact dates, times and locations for interpreter services.
2. ODA contacts interpreters to arrange the services.
3. Interpreters maintain time sheets. Time sheets must be signed by the interpreter, the instructor, and the student requiring the service. Interpreters turn in time sheets to ODA. Students qualifying for interpreter services are also responsible for keeping a record of interpreter hours.

**Instructors should notify ODA as soon as possible if interpreters miss class or tardiness is a problem.**

Students receiving interpreter services are responsible for notifying ODA of class cancellations, changes in schedules or absences. Assuming there is no emergency, ODA requires a **24-hour notification.** Failure to notify ODA of cancellations, changes in schedules, or absences may result in loss of interpreter services. ODA schedules all interpreters. A student may only request services from an individual interpreter if he or she intends to assume personal financial responsibility or payment for requested services. Interpreters are not provided for personal use. Students using interpreter services must sign an Interpreter Use Agreement form. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix B of the ODA Manual.

Sign language interpreters must have appropriate qualifications. Qualified interpreters:

- Interpret for classroom/lab and school-sponsored activities and events, workshops, meetings and campus activities when assigned
- Provide information on how to maximize benefits or interpreter services
- Understand and professionally comply with the Code of Ethics of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

Interpreters must be dependable, reliable, honest, and punctual in carrying out assigned duties. Interpreters are contracted employees of ODA. They are responsible for reporting to ODA, in a timely manner, conflicts that will prevent them from providing services so that replacements can be arranged.

**Note-Takers**

Note-takers are usually student volunteers enrolled in the same class section as the student requiring a note-taker. The term “note-taker” is used to denote a “volunteer note-taker.”
Procedures For Obtaining Note Takers:

1. Students requiring a note-taker deliver the accommodation letter to instructors.
2. Instructors make in-class announcements requesting a student to volunteer to be a note-taker. When asking classes for volunteers, students registered with ODA will not be identified as needing this accommodation. **If there are no volunteers, instructors should contact ODA as soon as possible.**
3. ODA provides NCR paper (duplicate carbonless notebook paper) that is used by the note-taker. At the end of each class, there is a copy of notes for the note-taker and the student registered with ODA. Students registered with ODA are responsible for transporting NCR paper from ODA to the note taker.
4. Students usually receive notes at the end of each lecture.
5. Note-takers are asked to complete and return a form indicating that they have provided this volunteer service. At the end of each semester, ODA sends letters of commendation thanking volunteers.

It is the student’s responsibility to immediately alert ODA if accommodation problems arise. Instructors should also inform ODA about note-taking problems. Once informed, ODA will quickly facilitate the resolution of the problem. Note-takers should not provide notes for classes that students miss or for portions of the class that students do not attend.

Personal Care Attendants

The university does not provide personal care attendants (PCAs) for students. If a student requires PCA services and requests a PCA as a roommate, there will be a residence room charge for the PCA. Locating and compensating the PCAs are responsibilities of the student, unless the student also receives services from Vocational Rehabilitation, who may choose to cover PCA services.

Readers

Readers are typically Southern Miss students. If requested, ODA assist students in finding readers. The reader’s role is to read, not to tutor. Readers are limited to a maximum of 40 hours per month. Hours over 40 a month must be justified. Readers may be paid from sources other than the university and are usually paid minimum wage.

Procedures For Obtaining Readers

1. Students requesting readers provide ODA with advance notice. If not, ODA cannot promise to locate a reader.
2. If requested, ODA assists in finding applicants to be a reader. Consideration is given to the student preferences. If students locate readers without ODA’s help
and it is expected that Vocational Rehabilitation or the university will compensate the reader, students must inform ODA and follow all procedures outlined.

3. Readers must complete employment forms at ODA with the reader’s compensation source determining what forms must be completed.

4. Readers and students are responsible for keeping track of time spent reading. To record the number of hours read, ODA provides Support Service Logs.

5. At the end of each month, completed Support Service Logs are turned into ODA. This form must be verified by ODA staff, the student and reader. If Vocational Rehabilitation is paying the reader, an authorization form must be completed each month by the reader.

Readers will not be paid until all required forms (employment forms, tax forms, Vocational Rehabilitation’s authorization forms, and Support Service Log) are completed. If forms are turned in late, payment will be delayed.

Since readers are typically students, they may have demands conflicting with reading for the student. For this reason, students who rely heavily upon reader services, are encouraged to have at least two readers.

Registration Assistance

ODA can assist students whose disability prevents them from registering. Students requiring this help must first seek advisement, then make an appointment with ODA during the student’s assigned registration period, which can be found on students’ SOAR accounts.

Substitutions and Waivers

Requests for course waivers are not granted as accommodations for students’ disabilities. However, requests for course substitutions will be forwarded to the department chair of the student’s major provided that the documentation of the student’s disability supports such a request. In reviewing substitution requests, the university also looks at the student’s history in taking the course with approved accommodations. ODA can only support the student’s request for a course substitution; it cannot be mandated. Course substitution decisions are made by the college of the student’s major, not ODA. If a substitution is permitted, the selection of alternate courses that can meet degree requirements is an academic decision made by the college of the student’s major that may require approval from the Office of the Provost.
Temporary Illnesses or Injuries

Students with temporary illnesses or injuries may not be eligible for formal accommodations with ODA. However, as a courtesy, ODA will provide some assistance with note taker paper, exams, or accessible classroom furniture.

Requests for excused absences and emergency notification are referred to the Office of Student-Oriented Services. For more information, please contact Alfreda Horton at 601.266.4025 or e-mail address, alfreda.horton@usm.edu.

Transportation

Transportation is not a university accommodation mandated under 504/ADA unless it is provided to all students. Transportation on campus is a personal responsibility. Students with mobility problems are encouraged to visit the campus before classes begin to assess their ability to move across campus. In some instances, students may need to explore the option of acquiring a motorized chair or scooter, or arranging for a friend or personal care attendant to assist them. Students with mobility problems are also encouraged to schedule free periods between classes to allow travel time or to schedule their back-to-back classes in buildings located in close proximity to each other. In the event of an emergency, assistance may be provided by the University Police by calling 601.266.4986.

Tutoring

Tutoring is not a university accommodation mandated under 504/ADA. However, tutoring is available for students who qualify for services from Southern Miss’s Student Support Services. Some academic departments also provide tutoring services. ODA is willing to act as a liaison with the faculty and campus organizations to assist students in locating a tutor. However, the student is responsible for compensating the tutor, unless the student also receives services from Vocational Rehabilitation. On occasion, Vocational Rehabilitation has paid for tutoring services.

Visitors with Disabilities

The reason for visiting Southern Miss’s campus will determine which department to contact about arranging accommodations or discussing access concerns. Persons with disabilities who plan to attend a specific event or conference should contact the department or organization sponsoring the event. For instance, if a prospective student wants a tour of the university, then the Admission’s Office should be contacted. Or if a person with a disability will attend a Summer Orientation session, then the First Year Initiative should be contacted, and so on. Persons who are unsure about which office to ask for assistance can call ODA at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232.
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Resources, Accessibility and Safety on Campus

Assistive Technology and Adaptive Equipment

Assistive Technology and Adaptive Equipment to assist students, faculty and staff are available at several locations on Southern Miss’s campuses. Anyone having questions or needing assistance in learning to use this technology or equipment should make an appointment with ODA’s technology specialist by calling 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232.

Cook Library Commons on the Hattiesburg Campus has the following assistive technology available:

Software:
- JAWS for Windows
- MAGic® Screen Magnification Software
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- JSAY
- OpenBook
- WYNN
- Duxbury Braille Translation Software

Hardware:
- MAGic® Large Print Keyboard
- Pearl
- VersaPoint Duo Braille Embosser
- CCTV
- Sorenson Video Phone

The Gulf Coast Library at Long Beach has the following software and equipment available:
- CCTV
- ZoomText Magnifier/Reader
- JAWS for Windows

The Fleming Education Center (FEC) on the Gulf Coast Campus at Long Beach has the following software available:
- ZoomText Magnifier/Reader
- JAWS for Windows

ODA's office suite, located in Bond Hall on the Hattiesburg campus, has the following assistive technology, software and equipment, for administering exam accommodations at ODA: JAWS for Windows and ZoomText. Further, a Braille Embosser (printer) with Duxbury Braille Translation software is available for in-office use at ODA.
Assistive Technology in Department Laboratories, Classrooms and Offices: When a need has been identified and verified, ODA will install assistive technology in classrooms, laboratories and offices on all Southern Miss teaching sites. For more information, call ODA technology specialist at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232. The following are software programs and equipment that ODA has ready to install:

- ZoomText Magnifier/Reader
- JAWS for Windows
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- ClaroRead Plus
- Color and Monochrome CCTVs

Cook’s Library Commons on the Hattiesburg Campus has a Sorenson Video Phone. The Sorenson Video Phone uses SorensonVRS (Video Relay Service) as an alternative to the TTY and TTY Relay Services. SorensonVRS will enable individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing to communicate more effectively and naturally with the hearing world with the use of Sorenson’s RID or NAD certified sign language interpreters and high speed tow way video communications.

Adaptive Equipment available for Loan from ODA: Students with identified and verified needs can borrow adaptive equipment from ODA. When borrowing equipment, students must sign an ODA Equipment Loan Receipt and Agreement. A copy of this agreement is located in Appendix B of this manual. The following is a list of equipment available for loan:

- **FM Listening Systems** for in-class use to benefit students with hearing impairments
- **TeleTypewriters (TTYs)** to communicate with telephones for persons with hearing and speech impairments
- **Audio recorders** for recording lectures

For detailed descriptions of the above assistive technology and adaptive equipment, refer to Appendix C of this manual or call ODA’s technology specialist at 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232.

**Career Services**

Career Services has counselors available to assist students in choosing a major, researching information in chosen fields of employment, and enhancing skills necessary for the job search. Services include career counseling, career interest assessment, computerized career guidance (FOCUS), career information library, resume and cover letter assistance, practice interviews, and other career-related assistance. Career Services is located in McLemore Hall, Room 125; the telephone number is 601.266.4153.
Counseling Center

The Counseling Center provides individual, group, and couples counseling for enrolled students. Individuals seek services for a wide variety of reasons that include depression, anxiety, relationship concerns, low self-esteem, substance use/abuse, sexual orientation concerns, eating disorders, and difficulty adjusting to university life. Counseling services are free and confidential. The Counseling Center also provides outreach and education services for groups on campus. Referral for Psychiatric services is available as needed. The Counseling Center is located in Room 214 of Kennard-Washington Hall (phone 601.266.4829) and is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. On weekdays, students can walk in and receive immediate assessment services from 9:45 to 11:15 a.m. and 1:45 to 3:15 p.m. The Counseling Center also provides crisis phone access to a counselor by calling 601.606.4357.

Dining Services

The Office for Disability Accommodations works with the Fresh Food Company (in the Thad Cochran Center) and other dining service establishments to coordinate accommodations and special nutrition services for students with disabilities. To schedule an appointment with the department’s registered dietician, call 601.266.5376.

Financial Aid

Students with disabilities may apply for financial aid through the Office of Financial Aid at Southern Miss. Financial aid professionals are available to assist students with disabilities with the application processes for institutional, state and federal aid. Students who have special circumstances that may impact their eligibility for aid should contact the Office of Financial Aid. These students may be eligible for supplemental assistance based on special circumstances that can be documented in the Office of Financial Aid. The priority deadline to apply for financial aid at Southern Miss is March 15 of each year.

Office hours are 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Students are encouraged to call the Office of Financial Aid at 601.266.4774, or write to The University of Southern Mississippi; Office of Financial Aid; 118 College Drive, #5101; Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001. Students can contact this office via e-mail at financial.aid@usm.edu. For additional information, students may also wish to access the Web site at www.usm.edu/financialaid.
Health Services for Students

It is strongly recommended that all students who register with ODA also register with Southern Miss’s Student Health Services. Student Health Services on the Hattiesburg campus can assist in providing specialized health care services. The telephone number is 601.266.5390.

Student Health Services is an outpatient ambulatory clinic that provides medical care to all Southern Miss students. Student Health Services provides unlimited consultations with health care providers for a fee of $10 per doctor's visit. Additional charges are required for medical supplies, laboratory tests, X-rays, and prescription and non-prescription medications. A laboratory and pharmacy are available to complement the health care team. Student Health Services offers a wide range of health-related services including allergy injections, immunizations, nutrition counseling, health education, social services, and women’s health and gynecology services.

Student Health Services is open Monday through Friday and is closed on weekends and University holidays; please check the Web site at www.usm.edu/student-health-services for hours of operation. After hours, students may receive medical care at Nan Family Health, on Highway 49, (phone: 601.288.8004); or at the After Hours Clinic, on Highway 98 West (phone: 601.261.5710); or at the Immediate Care, on Hardy Street, (phone: 601.261.3737); or at Southern Urgent Care, on Highway 98 (phone: 601.261.2727). These clinics require payment at time of service.

Medical Emergency Response Procedure for Students with Disabilities:

- It is the student’s responsibility to notify ODA and his or her individual instructors of medical conditions that might result in an emergency situation. Medical conditions that would require notification include, but are not limited to, seizure disorders, heart disease, abnormal heart rhythms, diabetes, hypoglycemia, cardiomyopathy, asthma, other breathing disorders, fainting spells, blackouts, chronic fatigue syndrome, severe arthritis, and head injury. Students with any medical condition that may cause an emergency should inform ODA to insure proper care.
- If a medical emergency should occur while a student is on campus, 601.266.4986 will be called and an ambulance requested. The student will be transported to an emergency room or to Southern Miss’s Student Health Services if the medical situation is within the scope of care that can be handled in the Student Health Services clinic. The student has the right to refuse transport and care. Prior notification to staff at ODA and instructors will assist with observance of the
student’s wishes. Medical emergencies will require relocating students to a safe environment, for example, moving the student out of classrooms, cafeterias, etc.

- The personnel of ODA are not medical personnel. Therefore, 601.266.4986 should be called first for the student to receive appropriate medical attention. ODA should be notified for support of the student, which includes notifying family/friends of an emergency, providing health information if the student were unable to do so, accompanying the student to the health care facility (if necessary), and serving as a liaison with faculty following an emergency.

Library Services

ODA works with library staff to ensure that students with disabilities receive appropriate and reasonable accommodations so that all library resources are accessible. Students requiring extensive assistance may contact ODA to make arrangements for reasonable accommodations. The telephone number for Cook Library is 601.266.4249.

The mission of Southern Miss Libraries is to contribute to the academic success of each student. In the case of students with special needs, the Libraries apply the recommendations of the Office for Disability Accommodations so that adequate accommodation is rendered. In order to make efficient use of library resources, the following actions by the student are recommended.

Before the first library assignment occurs:

1. Students make requests to ODA. Appropriate library accommodations will be determined by ODA, who will give the student an Approval for Library Assistance form describing the library accommodations.
2. Students arrange a meeting with the Library director by calling Cook Library (phone number: 601.266.4241). It is important to bring an ODA Approval for Library Assistance form to the meeting.
3. The Library director provides accommodation information to library staff at service desks and additional information for the student as to how the library will be able to assist.

When library use is needed:

- As for all Southern Miss students, questions may be asked either over the telephone or through the “Ask-A-Librarian” button on the library home page (www.lib.usm.edu). Information Services Librarians will either respond or refer the question to the appropriate person. The Information Desk telephone number is 601.266.4249. Students (registered with ODA) who use readers should utilize them when working on library assignments. Southern Miss Library personnel will train ODA students including those with readers in use of the library.
Library personnel are available to answer reference questions and assist with other informational needs.

- Make appointments and plan ahead when needing assistance so that someone is available to help. If the accommodation recommends that others make photocopies for the student, please provide full information and a reasonable turnaround time.
- Contact the Information Desk at 601.266.4249 to schedule an appointment with a librarian. Indicate what type of accommodation will be needed, such as searching databases, pulling materials, or making photocopies, etc., as based on ODA’s recommendations.

If you have questions or comments regarding use of Library Services, please contact: Tisha Zelner, Head of Information Services at 601.266.6170 or 601.266.4249.

University Police Department (Public Safety)

ODA coordinates efforts with Southern Miss’s University Police Department to ensure that special services requested by students with disabilities receive a timely and appropriate response. University Police offices are located on the first floor, west wing of Bond Hall; the telephone number is 601.266.4986, and the TTY number is 911.

Recreational Sports

For students, faculty and staff who wish to participate in leisure, fitness, or competitive programs, the Division of Recreational Sports offers something for everyone. Housed in the Payne Center, the division and its staff provide opportunities for participation in a variety of recreational and fitness-related activities. In addition, exercise prescriptions and fitness assessments are also available through the Fitness Assessment Center at a nominal fee. For a tour of facilities and information about services, please contact the assistant director of Wellness at Southern Miss Recreational Sports at 601.266.5405.

Residence Life

Physically accessible housing facilities for students with disabilities are available at Southern Miss. Students with special needs for housing should identify and request these needs on their housing application.

Applications to university housing are processed by date of receipt of the housing application and receipt of application fees. Therefore, it is important to submit the housing application prior to or by the priority deadline as stated on the housing application. Submission of a housing application does not guarantee on-campus residence/housing. Room/housing assignments are based on space availability.
Students requiring the service of a personal care attendant may note this requirement and the attendant’s name on their application. Students may request the attendant as a roommate. There is a residence room charge for attendants.

Residence Life offices are located on the first floor of Hickman Hall; the telephone number is 601.266.4783 and our e-mail address is reslife@usm.edu. Please visit the Web site at www.usm.edu/reslife for more information.

Speech and Hearing Sciences

Audiological evaluations, speech evaluations and speech therapy are available through the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences. Services are provided at a minimal charge to students, faculty and their immediate families. For scheduling audiological evaluations and speech evaluations, call 601.266.5232. This department can also be reached by using the TTY system; TTY numbers for this department are 601.266.5216 and 601.266.6042.

Student Support Services

Student Support Services (SSS) is a TRIO program federally funded through the U.S. Department of Education. The program provides academic assistance, personal counseling, cultural enrichment and individual support for eligible undergraduate students at Southern Miss. The primary objectives of SSS are to assist participants to maintain good academic standing, to persist in college, to graduate from the university with a baccalaureate degree, and perhaps enter a graduate or professional program.

A full range of academic and personal enrichment opportunities are offered through Student Support Services, including:

- individual tutoring and collaborative study groups
- academic and personal enhancement workshops
- academic, peer and personal counseling
- wellness, cultural and social activities
- writing labs
- math labs
- computer labs
- supplemental instruction
- opportunities to explore post graduate options
- opportunities to develop through leadership training

The U.S. Department of Education limits the number of program participants, and students are selected on the basis of academic need along with other criteria. To participate in the SSS program a student must be a citizen or permanent resident of the
U.S., have a GPA under a 3.0 or less and an ACT score of 22 or less, and qualify under one or more of the following categories:

- be a first-generation student (neither parent graduated from a 4 year college/university)
- meet federal guidelines for income eligibility
- have a documented disability (physical or learning); to apply for participation as a student with a disability, the student must be registered with the Office for Disability Accommodations

For more information, contact Student Support Services at 601.266.6910 or visit the program office in the SSS/McNair Scholars Building on the 2nd Floor of McLeMore Hall.

**TTY Locations on Campus**

TTY (text telephone) communication devices are sometimes used by persons with hearing impairments. Location of the TTY machines on Southern Miss’s campus and telephone numbers for these machines are:

Office for Disability Accommodations.................................601.266.6837  
Institute for Disability Studies ..............................................1.888.671.0051  
Campus Security (Police).....................................................911  
Department of Speech & Hearing...........................................601.266.6042  
Gulf Park Campus, Customer Service ..................................228.214.3231  
Gulf Park Campus, iTech......................................................228.214.3235

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact any Southern Miss office using the Mississippi Relay Service at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY). For more detailed information on the Mississippi Relay Service, TTYs and a comparison of the English language with American Sign Language (ASL), refer to Appendix D of the ODA manual.

**Campus Accessibility and Safety**

To ensure physical accessibility, Southern Miss strives to fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for buildings and facilities. Students should report any accessibility or safety concerns, as soon as possible, to anyone in the ODA professional staff (ODA director, assistant director, disability specialist, technology specialist, or administrative assistant). Upon hearing an access or safety concern, ODA will immediately address the situation. ODA works closely with all campus departments to keep the university accessible and safe. Further, ODA maintains a written record of the reported concerns and the university’s efforts to investigate and remedy the issue.
For safety purposes, it is recommended that students with disabilities keep a cellular phone with them at all times.

**Construction**

To maintain a safe and accessible campus environment, ODA works closely with the Safety Office and other campus departments. If buildings or areas on campus are undergoing construction, alternate accessible routes will be available. If a student experiences difficulty traveling a route or accessing a location because of construction, he or she should call ODA for assistance, the Southern Miss Safety Office or the University Police Department. Students should immediately report accessibility or travel hazards to the ODA staff, the Southern Miss Safety Office at 601.266.4414 or the University Police at 601.266.4986.

Procedures have been established for the Safety Office to provide advance notice to ODA about construction plans. Upon notification of such plans, ODA relays information about road closures, alternate travel routes and parking changes to students with significant visual and mobility problems. If you would like ODA to contact you about construction alerts, please inform ODA.

**Elevators**

Students who are dependent on elevators may wish to request that their classes be held on the first floor of a building. This request should be made to ODA at preregistration to ensure ample time for alternate room arrangements. Students should not allow themselves to be carried up or down stairs by faculty or other students. If a student cannot get to class because of a non-working elevator, he or she may request that the class be moved until such time the elevator is in working order.

In the event that an elevator is out of service, students dependent on elevators should never try to walk up the stairs. Any absences due to elevator problems will be excused. Students who miss a class may request alternate means of obtaining lecture content and materials. This could include tape recording of class lectures, copies of instructors’ notes and class notes, or individual makeup sessions with the professor. During daytime hours, students should immediately report a faulty elevator to the ODA. In evening hours, a report should be made to the University Police at 601.266.4986.

**Emergency Evacuation**

Students with disabilities residing in the university residence halls, who will need assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation, should notify ODA of this need as soon as they enroll in classes or during the initial accommodation meeting with ODA. ODA maintains a list of the dorm room locations for students who will need
assistance evacuating from residence halls during an emergency. In order to keep this list updated with accurate information, students should inform ODA if they relocate to another room in the university residence halls.

There can be tremendous variation in needs for persons with disabilities so individual preparedness in emergency planning is important. Students are strongly encouraged to develop an emergency strategy in advance. This should be done for every building in which student has classes, works or lives on campus. The nature of a student’s disability and the manner in which they routinely accommodate themselves will have some bearing on an individual’s evacuation plans.

Students with disabilities who may have difficulty while evacuating in emergent situations are advised to:

- carry cell phones at all times and have emergency numbers programmed in the phone
- determine ahead of time the best method for their emergency evacuation for each building they use on campus with consideration given to their individual needs (i.e., it may be necessary to have that someone assists them in walking down stairs)
- make arrangements with available friends who can assist in emergencies and establish contingency plans for those arrangements
- tell others (instructors, roommates, Residence Life assistants (RAs), supervisors, friends, etc.) about the personal plans for emergency evacuation.

**Escort Services on Campus**

The University Police Department provides a 24-hour escort service seven days a week. Escorts are provided upon request to those who have legitimate concerns for their personal safety when moving about campus. Escort phones are conveniently located in buildings throughout the campus or you may call 601.266.4986 to access the Campus Escort Service.

**Fire Safety**

Southern Miss’s Fire Safety Policy for individuals with disabilities can be found in Appendix A of the ODA Manual. If a fire alarm goes off and students are on the first floor of a building, they should leave through the closest accessible exit. Students on upper floors should not attempt to use the elevator nor should they allow themselves to be carried down the stairs. Students should move to the nearest enclosed stairwell. If the stairwell is not enclosed, students should remain in the hall next to the stairs. In case of smoke, students should move to the closest restroom. Students should call or notify a faculty member to call, the University Police and tell the dispatcher that a fire alarm
sounded and that they cannot exit the upper floor because of a disability. Students should state their name and exact location. The dispatcher will inform the fire department of students’ location. Students should stay on the line with the dispatcher and wait for further instructions. If there is a real fire, the dispatcher or the fire department will determine if the elevators are safe to use and will inform the student. If there is a fire and the elevators cannot be used, University Police will provide a stairwell evacuation device. This device can safely evacuate an individual weighing up to 300 pounds. Students should remember that fire fighters are specially trained in evacuation techniques, and students will be safer if they are familiar with and follow Southern Miss’s fire policy guidelines.

For safety purposes, it is recommended that students with disabilities keep a cellular phone with them at all times.

**Service Animals**

Service animals are allowed in classrooms and campus buildings. However, in some places, they may be prohibited due to health and safety restrictions or where animals may be in danger. If a such a situation arises, the student should contact ODA to seek an alternative accommodation. Ongoing use of a service animal should be reported to ODA. Students using service animals are asked to provide acceptable documentation for the need and insure that service animals have recent vaccinations and a statement of health. Students are responsible for keeping their animals clean, groomed and tending to their service animals’ elimination needs.

Owners should not allow their service animals to engage in disruptive behavior on campus. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, barking excessively, jumping on others, growling, wandering about and aggressive conduct.

Students using seizure dogs, should inform ODA, professors and the University Police of their dog’s typical responses and reactions to the student and others when a seizure occurs. If the student lives on campus, the Department of Residence Life should be notified.

University community members are asked to abide by the following guidelines:

- Allow a service animal to accompany the handler at all times and in all campus locations, with the exception of areas where animals are strictly prohibited for health or safety restrictions.
- Do not touch or feed service animals when the animal is working, because these actions distract the animal from required tasks.
- Do not deliberately startle or distract a service animal.
- Do not attempt to separate a service animal from its handler.
• Contact ODA with any questions, problems, or concerns that you may have regarding service animals on campus.

**Student Dismissal for Safety Reasons**

All students, regardless of disability, must comply with the standards of the Code of Student Conduct as printed in Southern Miss’s Student Handbook. Violations of any university policy will be managed according to the guidelines of the student judicial process. Students who behave in a manner that place themselves or others in danger may be dismissed from class or the university.
Appendix A

Procedure for the Resolution of Discrimination Complaints ........................................ 2

Southern Miss’s Fire Safety Policy for Individuals with Disabilities ............................... 6
PROCEDURE FOR THE RESOLUTION OF DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Any University of Southern Mississippi employee, student, applicant for admission or employment, or other participant in the university's programs or activities who believes s/he has been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, or Vietnam Era veteran status by a university employee may file a complaint with the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity, in accordance with the procedures described below.

Students or employees who wish to file complaints against students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students.

Federal law, as well as university policy, prohibits any form of retaliation against a person who files a discrimination complaint in good faith.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Complaints filed with the university will remain confidential to the extent allowed by law, while also allowing for a complete investigation. University personnel involved in or responsible for any aspect of a complaint, including the appeals process, shall maintain confidentiality throughout the processing of the complaint. All parties involved in the complaint process are expected to maintain confidentiality, both during the process and afterward.

**RETALIATION:** The University seeks to create an environment where students and employees are free to explore the possible violation of their civil rights without fear of reprisal. Retaliation is illegal and will not be tolerated by the University. Similarly, persons who use this process to bring bad faith allegations against an employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees and students are encouraged, where feasible, to reach an informal resolution to complaints through the administrative reporting structure of the academic or employment unit. However, if the complaint cannot be resolved by this avenue, or if the complainant wishes to access a formal process instead, the following procedures apply:

**Step 1:** Complaints must be received in writing in the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity within a reasonable period of time from the most recently alleged discriminatory act. "Reasonable" will be defined as 30 calendar days from such alleged action. [Note: at the discretion of the Office of AA/EEO, in certain situations complaints filed outside of this time limit may be investigated despite stated timelines.] Complaint forms may be obtained in the Office of AA/EEO, 310 McLemore Hall, or at the departmental Web site: http://www.usm.edu/aa-eeo. The written complaint must include the complainant's name and signature, and must include a brief written description of the alleged discriminatory act[s], as well as the name[s] of the person[s] who allegedly is/are responsible for such act[s].
**Step 2:** The director of the AA/EEO office will meet with the complainant and subsequently will determine if the written and verbal description of the alleged discriminatory act warrants further investigation into the allegations as presented. If it is determined that no potential violation of civil rights related university policy is being presented, the Office of AA/EEO will notify the complainant of such in writing within ten [10] working days of written receipt of the complaint. This notification will explain why the complaint does not state a possible violation of civil rights law or policy and may inform the complainant of other avenues of redress, as appropriate.

**Step 3:** If the Office of AA/EEO determines that the complaint as presented may involve a violation of civil rights related university policy, the complainant and respondent will be notified in writing of such. If determined appropriate by the Office of AA/EEO, the complainant will be given the option to pursue mediation as resolution to his/her concerns. **SEE "MEDIATION" BELOW.**

If the nature of the complaint is such that mediation is inappropriate and/or the complainant or respondent declines mediation or if mediation fails, the director of AA/EEO or his/her designee will investigate the allegation[s]. The director of the Office of AA/EEO will inform the following parties that a complaint has been filed and that an investigation will be conducted: the complainant, the respondent[s], the respondent's department head, dean, vice president, and the president. A typical investigation will involve meeting with the complainant, the person[s] named in the complaint, and with other persons who may have knowledge relevant to the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the director of the Office of AA/EEO will issue a written report in which the findings of the investigation will indicate either sufficient or insufficient evidence to support the allegation[s]. This determination will be based upon information obtained as a result of the investigation process. The complainant and the respondent will receive written notification of the findings. Written notification of the findings will also be sent to the administrators listed above.

In the event that there is a finding of a violation of university policy, the director of the Office of AA/EEO will recommend to the appropriate vice president that a directive be issued to stop the discriminatory behavior and make recommendations concerning disciplinary action against the respondent. Additionally, corrective action, when appropriate, will be recommended to eradicate the effect of the discriminatory behavior. The vice president to whom the report is sent will issue written notification of disciplinary action within ten [10] working days of receipt of report from the Office of AA/EEO. Details of the disciplinary action will not be shared with the complainant, nor may the complainant appeal the disciplinary action itself. The respondent may, however, appeal the disciplinary action.

In the event that there is a finding of insufficient evidence of a violation of university policy, the director of the Office of AA/EEO will notify the complainant, respondent,
and above named university administrators.

**Step 4:** Should the complainant or the respondent wish to appeal the decision[s] of the Office of AA/EEO and/or decision of the vice president made at Step 3, s/he may do so in writing to the Office of the President, within ten [10] working days from the date of written receipt of decisions made at Step 3. The president will appoint a panel and will name a panel convener. The panel will be comprised of three employees, with at least one tenured faculty employee and one non-faculty employee.

The complainant or respondent may request an appeal panel review on any of the following grounds:

a. that the complaint procedure was not followed;

b. that new information is to be presented, or which could have had a material effect upon the findings

The appellant will provide a written request to the Office of the President for an appeal, citing at least one of the bases listed above, within ten [10] working days from the date of the written receipt of the decision made at Step 3. The president will appoint the panel as described above. The panel will determine if at least one of the grounds for appeal has been met. If its determination is that neither of the grounds has been met, the appellant will be notified of such in writing. If the panel determines that at least one of the grounds for appeal has been met, the panel convener will notify both the complainant and the respondent in writing that the appeal panel will meet and review the information provided by the appellant. The panel will share with the other party the information provided by the appellant. Both parties will be invited to present information to the panel, at a date decided upon by the panel convener.

Once the appeal panel has reached a determination, it will recommend, in writing, that the Office of the President reverse, amend, or uphold the finding and/or the disciplinary action. The panel is empowered to make recommendations only.

**MEDIATION**

Mediation is a process by which the University attempts to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of all involved parties without reaching a formal finding regarding a violation of the University's non-discrimination policy. Mediation seeks to protect the confidentiality of all involved parties to the extent allowed by law. At any time during the mediation process, either party may choose to terminate the process, and the complaint will then be investigated by the Office of AA/EEO per procedures listed above.

Generally, mediation will involve only the complainant, the respondent and the mediator. If the complaint is successfully resolved through mediation, each party will sign a document that describes the mutually agreed-upon terms. Any deviation from the terms of the agreement allows either party the right to refile formal charges with the
Office of AA/EEO.

PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW BY APPEAL PANEL

- Appellant makes request in writing to the Office of the President within 10 workings days of receipt of determination letter.

- President appoints a three-person panel to review the request, designating a convener from that group. The panel will consist of at least one tenured faculty member, one staff member and one person from the employee group of which the appellant is a member.

- Panel reviews request and determines if ground[s] for appeal have been satisfied. If not, panel indicates such in writing to appellant.

- If panel determines that appropriate grounds have been established [from the bases listed in the complaint procedures], it will determine a date/time for the panel to hear the appeal and will notify both parties of such. Information provided by the appellant will be shared with opposing party. The panel may request involvement in the hearing from any member of the university whom it believes may have information pertinent to the appeal. These persons include the AA/EEO officer and any witnesses that either party may recommend to the panel. Witnesses are invited to participate at the discretion of the panel.

- Hearings will be conducted as follows:
  1. Chair will invite appellant to give a brief overview of the reason [s] for appeal.
  2. Panel members will be invited to question appellant.
  3. Opposing party will be allowed to respond to ground [s] on which appellant appealed.
  4. Panel member will be invited to question other party.

- The panel will reach a determination either supporting the findings and/or disciplinary action, or supporting the appeal of the appellant. The panel will forward their findings and any recommendations to the president for his review. Within 10 working days of receipt of the panel's findings, the president will inform all involved parties of his decision in writing, based on input from the appeal panel.
Southern Miss’s Fire Safety Policy for Individuals with Disabilities

For individuals with disabilities, the first floor is the safest area of most buildings. The Southern Miss Safety Department and the City of Hattiesburg Fire Department recommend that individuals with disabilities that limit mobility locate their office and limit their workspace as much as possible to the first floor.

Southern Miss’s fire safety policy for an individual with a disability who is in a building above the level of exit during a fire alarm is as follows.

When the building fire alarm goes off, individuals with disabilities should

1. Call the University Police Department at ext. 64911. Tell the dispatcher their name and that they are individuals with disabilities that impair their mobility and are unable to exit the building by a stairway. The dispatcher should be given the current location and the location where they will wait out the fire alarm. They should also give the dispatcher a callback number, if possible.*

2. They should go to the nearest stairwell. If the building has an enclosed stairwell,** they should go inside the stairwell and wait for the University Police officers to further advise them or for the alarm to silence. When the fire alarm stops sounding, it will be safe to reenter the building.

3. If there is an actual fire, the firefighters on the scene will decide if it is safe to use the elevators. If the elevators are considered safe to use, the University Police officers will switch the elevators to Fireman’s Service, which will allow them to override the fire alarm and bring people down on the elevator.

4. If there is an actual fire, and the firefighters on the scene decide it is not safe to use the elevator, the University Police officers will use their stairwell evacuation device. This will allow them to bring an individual with a disability down the stairwell to the exit level, then out to a safe distance from the building.***

* It is recommended that all individuals with a disability carry a cell phone.

** If the building does not have an enclosed stairwell, wait by the stairwell. If smoke begins to come up the stairwell, call the University Police and tell them you are seeking refuge in the closest restroom.
Appendix B

Sample Accommodation Letter ............................................................................................................2
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Date: January 10, 2011

To: Instructor

Re: Accommodations for John Doe

Mr. Doe has documentation of a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on file with the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA). He has been approved for the following accommodations:

1. **Extended test taking time and minimal-distraction test environment.** Please provide the student with extended time (1.5 times) to complete exams and a minimal distraction test environment and confirm with the student how this accommodation will be provided. *If you are unable to do this, please inform ODA as soon as possible.*

2. **Volunteer note taker.** Please assist our office in locating a volunteer note taker in your class. *When asking the class for a volunteer, the student should not be identified as the individual requiring this accommodation.* However, in a setting that will insure the privacy of the student, introduce the student to the note taker so they can make arrangements for exchanging notes. ODA provides note taking paper for the student who gives it to the note taker. Note takers should not provide notes for classes that students miss. Please give the enclosed *Note Taker Form* envelope to the note taker. *If you can not find a volunteer, it is important that you inform ODA as soon as possible.*

3. **Preferential seating in the classroom.** Please permit the student to sit in the front of the class.

For online classes, please communicate with the student to confirm that you have received this letter and how accommodations will be implemented.

If this student indicates that he/she does not need any of the above accommodations, please write what the student said directly onto this letter, then call ODA so we can also record the change in our files. This letter is for you, so record the date of its receipt below and **file it in a place that will ensure the student’s privacy.** Further, please do not discuss this private information with the student in front of others. If the student reports any access problems or if you have questions or concerns, please contact our office.

Thank you for your assistance,

Suzy B. Hebert, Director

CC: Student file

Student **Received by:** __________________________ **Date of receipt:** __________

Sample Accommodation Letter
Consent Form
Office for Disability Accommodations
University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive # 8586
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601-266-5024 or 228-214-3232

Student’s Name: ___________________________ Date: ______________________

USM ID#: ___________________________ Date of Birth: ______________________

I hereby authorize The University of Southern Mississippi’s Office for Disability Accommodations to communicate with the following: (Please check)

_____ Parents

List exclusions: __________________________________________________________

_____ USM Faculty/Staff, On Campus Services (i.e. Health Clinic, Residence Life, etc.)

List exclusions: __________________________________________________________

_____ Off Campus Services (i.e. Professionals, Schools, Vocational Rehab., etc.)

List exclusions: __________________________________________________________

Communication as denoted above may include obtaining and/or releasing student’s historical and/or current information regarding assessment, diagnosis, needs, recommendations, treatment, prior services, academic records, performance, or information that may relate to accommodating student’s needs on USM’s campus. This consent form will be valid until revoked by student.

A photocopy of the original consent form shall be as valid as the original consent form.

Signature__________________________________________ Date: ______________________

Witnessed by________________________________________ Date: ______________________

This form requires a second signature from another individual. Please have this individual sign on the line after “Witnessed by.”
Release of Information Form
Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA)
University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #8586
Hattiesburg, MS  39406-0001
Phone (601) 266-5024  Fax (601) 266-6035

I, _________________________________, hereby authorize the Office for Disability Accommodations at the University of Southern Mississippi to exchange information with:

__________________________________________________
(Specify Physician, Hospital, Clinic, Agency, Etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Information exchanged will pertain to:

__________________________________________________

Identifying information of the individual authorizing the exchange of their information:

Name: _________________________________  DOB: ________  SS#: __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I hereby authorize ODA to exchange information with the above listed individual or agency. Information exchanged will pertain to:

__________________________________________________

Student Signature/Parent/Legal Guardian  Date

__________________________________________________

Witness  Date

Authorization by written signature for Release of Records will remain valid as long as student is enrolled at the University of Southern Mississippi, or unless rescinded in writing before such time. A photocopy of the original Release of Records form will be as valid as the original Release of Records form.
Student Agreement for Use of Interpreter Services

Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA)
The University of Southern Mississippi

Upon request, interpreters are provided for students with documented hearing loss or deafness. Students qualifying for interpreter services are expected to follow the policies and procedures as outlined in this agreement.

- Students must make request for interpreters in a timely manner through ODA. When making a request, students must provide ODA with the exact dates, times, and locations for interpreter services. ODA will contact interpreters to arrange services.

- Students must notify ODA of changes in schedule(s), cancellation of class(es) or events, planned absences, illness or emergency absences. Assuming there is no emergency, ODA requires 24 hour notification for changes in interpreter schedules. **If a student is repeatedly absent without notification, the student must meet with the ODA director or assistant director and the need for this accommodation may be reviewed and possibly discontinued.**

- If a student requests services from an individual interpreter, he or she will assume personal financial responsibility or payment for these services. **Interpreters are not provided for personal use.**

- Students are responsible for promptly informing ODA if there is a problem with interpreter services.

I, _________________________________, read and understand the policies and procedures as described in *The Student Agreement for Use of Interpreter Services* at The University of Southern Mississippi.

Student Signature _____________________________ Date ________________

ODA Staff _____________________________ Date ________________
Student Testing Guidelines
Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA)
The University of Southern Mississippi

In order to accommodate your disability testing needs, ODA urges students to adhere to the following guidelines. Throughout these guidelines, the term “test” may refer to an exam, test, or quiz.

To schedule a test with ODA:

· Contact ODA five (5) working days prior to the test date.

· Schedule the test at the same time (and date) as the class test unless the student’s class schedule or ODA’s schedule interferes. Otherwise, the instructor must approve an alternate testing time.

· Remind the instructor that test will be taken at ODA. This should be done for each test taken at ODA.

To reschedule a test with ODA:

· Take the test by the date the instructor gives on the “Testing Instructions” form, or obtain the instructor’s approval to take the exam after that date. The instructor must call ODA to convey that the test can be rescheduled. Tests can be rescheduled after the instructor calls ODA.

· Proof or written documentation from an appropriate professional may be needed to verify the extenuating circumstances that prevent the test from being administered at the scheduled time.

Arrive on time. If students are late for a test (more than 15 minutes), the test may be regarded as a missed test that must be rescheduled and the above rescheduling guidelines will apply.

Adhere to rule about items not allowed in Testing Rooms. Students’ personal belongings, purses, books, book bags, notes, cell phones, computers or other electronic devices, are not allowed in the testing room unless specified on the Testing Instructions Form that is completed by the instructor. If ODA suspects academic dishonesty during testing, it will be investigated immediately. Mirrors, video cameras and observation will be used to ensure that cheating does not occur.

Student Name ____________________    ID # _______________________________

Student Signature ____________________________________    Date _______________________________

ODA Staff Signature ___________________________________   Date _______________________________
Testing Instructions Form
Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA)
P.O. Box 8586 Phone 266-5024 Fax 266-6035

Please complete this form and attach it to the exam, then deliver or mail the form and exam to the ODA Testing Coordinator, Box 8586. For confidentiality reasons, do not write the student’s name on the outside of the envelope when sending the test to ODA.

Student’s Name:________________________ Course:________________________

Instructor’s Name:________________________ Phone Numbers:________________________

Instructor’s Office (building & room #):________________________

Amount of time class has to take exam:________________________

Exam date for class:________________________

At times, students cancel and reschedule exams, especially those with chronic health conditions. If an exam is cancelled and rescheduled, the exam must be administered by this date:________________________

Student should: (check all that apply)

_____ Use calculator (specify type)________________________

_____ Use scantron

_____ Use bluebook

_____ Use extra paper

_____ Use statistical tables

_____ Use textbooks (specify)________________________

_____ Use notes (specify)________________________

_____ Student may keep exam

_____ Other (specify)________________________

To receive completed exam:

_____ ODA will return in campus mail to Box #________________________

_____ Instructor will pick up at ODA

Instructor’s Signature:________________________________________
Student Agreement for Use of Document Conversion Services  
The University of Southern Mississippi

Upon request, Document Conversion services are provided to students who are qualified with supporting information from an appropriate health care professional. The Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) oversees the extensive processes involved in obtaining or converting required course readings for accessibility. To provide these services, timely cooperation is required from both the university faculty and students. Therefore, students are expected to follow the policies and procedures as outlined in this agreement.

- To have materials ready in an alternate format at the start of a semester, students must preregister. Students must meet with their advisor to determine what classes to schedule and, if necessary, to contact ODA for assistance with registration. ODA recommends that students make appointments with their advisors before the normal advisement period. ODA can register students before or after SOAR’s normal registration times.

- Students must inform ODA, as soon as possible, about any of the following changes:
  
  (1) when classes are dropped or added, (2) when a course section is changed, or (3) if a student becomes aware about a change in instructor assignment for a course. **Students should be aware that when schedules are altered, especially if the change occurs near the beginning of a semester, materials may not be ready in an accessible format at the start of the semester.**

- For conversion of textbooks and supplemental books, students are required to show proof of purchase of these items.

- Student gives ODA permission to cut binding from textbook and rebind with comb or spiral binding, if textbook cannot be acquired through other means. This will allow for proper scanning and editing in conversion to alternate formats. ODA will not be held responsible for any damage to the materials that occur as a result of conversion to alternate format.

- At the beginning of the semester, students should bring a copy of the course syllabus to ODA and immediately notify ODA of any syllabus change or newly assigned material.

- ODA will contact the student when converted materials are ready for pick up. It is the student’s responsibility to pick up the materials. Students must return converted books at the end of each semester.

- Students must **promptly inform ODA if there is a problem** with Document Conversion services.

I, _________________________________, have read and understand the policies and procedures as described in *The Student Agreement for Use of Document Conversion Services* at The University of Southern Mississippi. I understand that the failure to follow the policies and procedures may result in a delay when assignments and reading materials will be ready for use in alternate formats.

Student Signature _________________________________ Date ________________

ODA Staff _________________________________ Date ________________
Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA)
Fall 2011 Semester Evaluation of Services

Please respond to all questions. Circle or write the answer that is most accurate regarding your experience with ODA for Fall 2011 semester. We appreciate your time!

1. Did you have contact with the Office for Disability Accommodations during Fall 2011?
   Yes       No

2. Did you request assistance or disability accommodations for Fall 2011?
   Yes       No

3. Are you satisfied with the professionalism and courtesy of our staff?
   Dissatisfied
   \[\text{1, 2, 3, 4, 5}\] Very Satisfied

4. Are you aware of the information and resources available on the ODA website at www.usm.edu/oda?
   Yes       No

5. What assistance from ODA has been the most helpful? ______________________________

6. If our office offered programs or lectures, would you be likely to attend? Yes      No
   If yes, what topic or type of program would interest you? ______________________________

7. Overall, how satisfied were you with ODA?
   Dissatisfied
   \[\text{1, 2, 3, 4, 5}\] Very Satisfied

Your comments are welcome: ____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
Approval for Library Assistance Form

To: Tisha Zelner, USM Libraries

From: Suzy Hebert

Date: _______________________

Please see that USM Libraries’ personnel provide assistance to ______________ for collection access/use with the following. Assistance will not circumvent the intellectual process of information discovery for research purposes.

☐ Making photocopies (student is responsible for cost of copies)

☐ Pulling library materials from the shelves for use

☐ Transporting library materials to a work space WITHIN THE LIBRARY

☐ Individual library orientation/tour for student and/or helper(s)

☐ Individual research training for student and/or helper(s)

☐ Special checkout of non-circulating materials for use with assistive equipment

☐ ____________________________________________________________

Approved by:

___________________________________________, USM Library Services
The University of Southern Mississippi  
Equipment Loan Agreement

Receipt is hereby acknowledged of loan equipment from the University of Southern Mississippi’s Office for Disability Accommodations:

Date of Loan Equipment: ________________________________

Description of Loan Equipment: ________________________________

USM Property Number: __________________ Serial Number: ____________

Condition of Equipment: ________________________________

Cost of Equipment: ________________________________

This equipment is the property of the University of Southern Mississippi, subject to recall whenever needed. If it is not in the same condition as when it was loaned, I agree to pay for any damage or loss of the listed equipment.

I understand that failure to return equipment as requested may result in a hold being placed on my University account and that my University account may be charged for the value of the listed equipment.

Borrower’s Name (print): ________________________________________

Signature: ____________________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________

Phone Numbers: ______________________________________________

Confidential

Date Equipment Returned: _______________________________________

Checked in by ODA Staff (name): ________________________________

Condition of Equipment when returned: __________________________
Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA)
Student Procedural Agreement

As a student registered with Southern Miss’s Office for Disability Accommodations, I understand that it is my responsibility to:

- Seek advisement with my academic advisor every semester then register for the courses that I choose to take.
- Contact ODA Staff every semester to request accommodations ahead of time as I understand that accommodations are not retroactive.
- Pick up accommodation letters at ODA and deliver them to my instructors every semester. I will meet privately with each instructor to discuss contents of my accommodation letters.
- Inform ODA Staff as soon as possible if approved accommodations are not implemented in a satisfactory manner or if other problems arise.
- For online classes: (1) communicate with instructor or academic department to determine best way to deliver accommodation letters; (2) confirm instructor’s receipt of accommodation letters; (3) consult with instructor about how accommodations will be implemented; (4) if student has difficulty delivering letters to instructors, request assistance from ODA; (5) for each quiz and exam, remind instructors about plans for implementing accommodations; (6) inform ODA if any problems arise.
- Make advance requests for specific accommodations requiring extended preparation time (i.e., document conversion of reading materials, sign language interpreters; finding readers).
- Contact ODA Staff to request new accommodations, if needed.
- Contact ODA Staff to request “work” accommodations on Southern Miss’s campus, if needed.
- Provide current documentation to support new accommodation requests or work accommodations for student employment on Southern Miss’s campus.

I was informed about the online ODA Manual, the option of obtaining a paper copy of this manual and that the manual is also available in an alternate format. The online manual can be found on ODA’s Web site at www.usm.edu/oda.

Student Name:____________________________________ USM ID #: ______________________

Student Signature:________________________________ Date:____________________________

ODA Staff or Witness Signature_______________________ Date:__________________________

If you received this form via the mail, sign and have it witnessed. Please make a copy for yourself and return the original to ODA in the attached self-addressed, postage paid envelope.
Appendix C

Assistive Technology .......................................................... 2
Designing Accessible Web Sites Tipsheet ................................. 11
What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology is

- accessible computer software and hardware that persons with disabilities can use;
  and,

- Equipment that can serve as compensatory tools for persons with disabilities.

Why do we have Assistive Technology?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that universities provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities to access the services and programs offered. This includes not only physical access to buildings, but also involves many other areas including access to computers and websites.

Students with access to assistive technology and support services usually:

- have higher grade point averages,
- can take more classes per semester,
- are less likely to drop courses; and,
- are more likely to succeed in enrolled courses.
Assistive Technology at Southern Miss

Assistive Technology at Southern Miss is available on the Hattiesburg and Gulf Coast campuses.

Cook Library Commons on the Hattiesburg Campus and the Gulf Coast Library at Long Beach have the following assistive technology available:

Software:
- JAWS for Windows
- MAGic® Screen Magnification Software
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- JSAY
- OpenBook
- WYNN
- Duxbury Braille Translation Software

Hardware:
- MAGic® Large Print Keyboard
- Pearl
- VersaPoint Duo Braille Embosser
- CCTV
- Sorenson Video Phone

If you need assistance locating, using, or to request assistive technology in the Cook Library Learning Commons or the Gulf Coast Library call iTech at 601-266-4357 (HELP) or ODA at 601-266-5024.

ODA's office suite, located in Bond Hall on the Hattiesburg Campus, has Assistive Technology, software and equipment, for administering exam accommodations at ODA: CCTV, JAWS for Windows and ZoomText. Further, a Braille Embosser (Printer) with Duxbury Braille Translation software and Tactile Image Enhancer is available for in-office use at ODA.
Assistive Technology in Department Laboratories & Classrooms:
When a need has been identified and verified, the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) will install Assistive Technology in classrooms, laboratories and offices on all Southern Miss Teaching Sites. For more information and to request software or hardware, call the ODA Technology Specialist at (601) 266-5024. Software and hardware available for this purpose is:

- ZoomText Magnifier/Reader
- JAWS for Windows
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- Color and Monochrome CCTVs
- ClaroRead Plus
- MathTalk
- Scientific Notebook

Adaptive Equipment available for Loan from ODA:
Students with identified and verified needs can borrow adaptive equipment from ODA. When borrowing equipment, students must sign an ODA Equipment Loan Receipt and Agreement form. The following is a list of equipment available for loan:

- FM Listening Systems
- Audio recorders
- TeleTypewriters (TTys)
- Graphic Aid for Mathematics
- Math Window

For detailed information on assistive technology and equipment available from iTech and ODA, read on!
Descriptions of adaptive software available:

**JAWS for Windows**
JAWS is a sophisticated screen reader with voice synthesizer for individuals with visual impairments and learning disabilities. This computer software program works well with Windows and the Internet. For more information on this software, visit: [http://www.freedomscientific.com](http://www.freedomscientific.com)

**ZoomText Magnifier/Reader**
ZoomText Magnifier and Reader is a computer software program with an advanced screen magnifier and screen reader for low vision. It reads all essential Windows components and can enlarge text from 2x to 16x on a color monitor. For more information on this software, visit: [http://www.aisquared.com](http://www.aisquared.com)

**MAGic® Screen Magnification Software**
MAGic is a screen magnification program designed for use by individuals with low vision. This software enlarges text up to 12 times and graphics, including Windows, up to 8 times. Other features include complete type through access; follow-the-cursor, follow-the-mouse, and attribute tracking modes; a screen location display; support for 8-, 16-, 24-, and 32-bit color; color smoothing; ability to use keystrokes to access a list of running programs and system tray items, and to bring up column and row settings, lists of cells, cells, rows, cells with content, and lists of hyperlinks and comments in Word. For more information on this software, visit: [http://www.freedomscientific.com](http://www.freedomscientific.com)

**Dragon Naturally Speaking**
Dragon Naturally Speaking is a computer software program that can assist persons having difficulty using computer keyboards. So instead of typing, the user speaks into a microphone to dictate correspondence, notes, reports and E-mail. For more information on this software, visit: [http://www.nuance.com/dragon/index.htm](http://www.nuance.com/dragon/index.htm)
Duxbury Braille Translation Software
The Duxbury Braille Translation Software is used to provide Braille computer output for individuals who are blind. It can be used with any commercial Braille Embosser to include the VersaPoint Duo Braille Embosser located in the Cook Library Commons or the Enabling Technologies Juliet Pro 60 Braille Embosser located at the Office for Disability Accommodations in Bond Hall. For more information on this software, visit:
http://www.duxburysystems.com

JSay
J-Say Professional is a voice input program designed for use by individuals who are blind or have low vision. This product enables users of JAWS for Windows to talk to the computer using a natural voice, and obtain speech feedback of their dictation and other related on-screen activity. For more information on this software, visit:
http://www.thespeechgurus.com/jsaysoftware.html

OpenBook
OpenBook software is a screen reader program that can be used on computers with speech synthesizer and scanner features. This software can benefit students with visual impairments and learning disabilities. For more information on this software, visit:
http://www.freedomscientific.com/

WYNN
WYNN is a software program for people who struggle with reading and writing. WYNN lets you hear and see what you type into the computer, files that are already in the computer, and the Internet. For more information on this software, visit:
http://www.freedomscientific.com/
**ClaroRead Plus**
ClaroRead PLUS is a computer software program designed to help individuals with reading and writing disabilities. ClaroRead Plus will read any text document, e-mail, and web page or a scanned document. For more information on this software, visit:  

**MathTalk**
For persons having difficulty using computer keyboards, MathTalk allows a user to voice any level of math through Dragon Naturally Speaking and Scientific Notebook. For more information on this software, visit:  
http://www.mathtalk.com/products.htm

**Scientific Notebook**
Scientific Notebook is software that allows the user to create documents with mathematics, text and create mathematical graphs. For more information on this software, visit: http://www.mackichan.com/

**Descriptions of adaptive equipment available:**

**CCTV**
A CCTV (closed-circuit television) or video magnifier which provides a simple way for persons with low vision to enlarge text and images. CCTVs are used mostly for reading but can be used for writing and other activities. There are several different makes and models of CCTVs. Depending on the brand and model, CCTV systems can magnify materials from 4x to 50x with 24 different foreground/background color combinations. CCTVs are available in a single unit model with its own screen included or can be plugged into a computer screen so that the user can work simultaneously with the computer and the CCTV. For more information on this equipment, visit:  
**MAGic® Large Print Keyboard**

The MAGic® Large Print Keyboard provides low vision users with an easy-to-read keyboard with 22 dedicated MAGic keys that make learning and using MAGic screen magnification software easier than ever. For more information on this equipment, visit: [http://www.freedomscientific.com/Products/LowVision/MAGicLargePrintKeyboard](http://www.freedomscientific.com/Products/LowVision/MAGicLargePrintKeyboard)

**VersaPoint Duo Interpoint Braille Embosser**

The VersaPoint Duo Braille Embosser is a printer that is used along with the Duxbury Braille Translation Software translates formatted text (in Microsoft Word) to Braille. The VersaPoint Duo Braille Embosser will print in either single side mode or dual side mode. It has the capability to emboss in Grade 1 or Grade 2 Braille. For more information on this equipment and software, visit: [http://www.synapseadaptive.com/blazie/versapoint%20duo.htm](http://www.synapseadaptive.com/blazie/versapoint%20duo.htm)

**Juliet Pro Braille Embosser**

The Juliet Pro Braille Embosser is a printer that is used with the Duxbury Braille Translation Software. It translates formatted text (in Microsoft Word) to Braille. The Juliet Pro Braille Embosser will print in either single side mode or dual side mode. It has the capability to emboss in Grade 1 or Grade 2 Braille. For more information on this equipment and software, visit: [http://www.brailler.com/juli2.htm](http://www.brailler.com/juli2.htm)

**Pearl**

The Pearl is a scanning camera used to read newspapers, magazines, books etc. for students who are blind, have low vision or have a learning disability. This device can be used with WYNN or OpenBook to read text from scanned material aloud. For more information on this equipment, visit: [http://www.freedomscientific.com](http://www.freedomscientific.com)
Tactile Image Enhancer
The Tactile Image Enhancer is a tactile graphics embosser designed for individuals who are blind or have low vision. This device can be used with Flexi-Paper to create tactile maps, graphs, charts, calendars, etc. For more information on this equipment visit: http://www.repro-tronics.com/tie.html

Graphic Aid for Mathematics
The Graphic Aid for Mathematics allows the user to construct geometric and other figures and graphs related to arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus using cork board, push pins, rubber bands and flat spring wires.

Math Window
Math Window is a math teaching tool that uses Nemeth Code Braille and text magnetic tiles to easily create math formulas on a flat service for easy reading. Both the Basic Math Kit and the Algebra Math kit are available for use.

Sorenson Video Phone
The Sorenson Video Phone uses Sorenson VRS (Video Relay Service) as an alternative to the TTY and TTY Relay Services. Sorenson VRS will enable individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing to communicate more effectively and naturally with the hearing world through the use of Sorenson's RID or NAD certified sign language interpreters and high speed two way video communications. http://www.sorensonvrs.com/index

FM Listening Systems
For students with hearing impairments, an FM Listening System can transmit the speaker’s voice directly to the user’s ears. This may help in focusing on what the speaker is saying or enable the user to hear the speaker better, especially in large classrooms.
**Audio Recorder**
An audio recorder is a standard tape recorder or digital recorder used by students to record and play back lectures.

**TeleTYpewriter (TTY)**
A TTY is a special device that lets people with hearing and speech impairments use telephones to communicate by typing messages back and forth to one another instead of talking and listening.

**Assistive Technology Web Sites**

- **Universal Design**

- **ATIA (Assistive Technology Industry Association)**
  [http://www.atia.org](http://www.atia.org)

- **AbleData**
  [http://www.abledata.com](http://www.abledata.com)

- **CATEA The National Public Website on Assistive Technology**
  [http://assistivetech.net/](http://assistivetech.net/)

- **Web Page Accessibility**

- **Professional Rehab and AT Organization**
  [http://www.resna.org](http://www.resna.org)

- **Parent Advocacy Web Site**
  [http://www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

- **AT at Southern Mississippi**
  [http://www.usm.edu/oda](http://www.usm.edu/oda)

**For More Information Contact:**

Office for Disability Accommodations
118 College Drive #8586
Hattiesburg, MS 39406
Phone: 601-266-5024
Fax: 601-266-6035
Email: Karen.Lott@usm.edu
[http://www.usm.edu/oda](http://www.usm.edu/oda)
Designing Accessible Web Sites Tipsheet

Principles of Accessible Design:

3. Ensure users can complete and submit all forms – [http://www.webaim.org/techniques/forms](http://www.webaim.org/techniques/forms)
5. Caption and/or provide transcripts for media – [http://www.webaim.org/techniques/captions/](http://www.webaim.org/techniques/captions/)
6. Ensure accessibility of non-HTML content, including PDF files, Microsoft Word documents, PowerPoint presentations and Adobe Flash content
9. Make sure content is clearly written and easy to read – [http://www.webaim.org/techniques/writing/](http://www.webaim.org/techniques/writing/)

Using Dreamweaver to Make Accessible Web Content:

- Accessibility features – [http://www.webaim.org/techniques/dreamweaver/#features](http://www.webaim.org/techniques/dreamweaver/#features)
- Creating accessible content – [http://www.webaim.org/techniques/dreamweaver/#creating](http://www.webaim.org/techniques/dreamweaver/#creating)

Evaluate the Accessibility of Your Site Using Tools:


For more information, please visit [http://www.webaim.org/articles/](http://www.webaim.org/articles/)
Appendix D

Mississippi Relay.........................................................................................................................2

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Mississippi Relay provides a full telephone interpreting service between people who can hear and those who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled. Communications Assistants (CAs) have computers that enable them to hear the voice users as well as read the signals from the TTY users.

The service is available for Mississippian 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There are no restrictions imposed on MS Relay calls. Confidentiality for relay users and CAs is assured by Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Ruling.

New Video Relay Service

This is a free relay service for those who feel most comfortable expressing themselves through American Sign Language (ASL). This innovative solution allows the consumer to communicate with a live video interpreter either via a computer with a video camera or via videophone. The video interpreter signs the telephone conversation with an ASL user and voices to a hearing person via standard telephone. This allows the participant to see expressions and gestures during the call.

Try making a free (both local and long distance) video relay call today at www.msvrs.com or H.323 IP address - SPRINTVRS.TV

Mississippi Relay Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>711</td>
<td>TTY/ASCII/Voice/VCO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-582-2544</td>
<td>Spanish Relay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-582-2233</td>
<td>TTY/ASCII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-582-2395</td>
<td>Speech to Speech (STS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-877-582-0756</td>
<td>Voice Carry-Over (VCO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-900-230-9191</td>
<td>900 Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-582-2233</td>
<td>Hearing Carry-Over (VCO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-676-3777</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click Here to Download Relay Documents

How do I make or receive a Relay call?
The hearing disabled person dials a relay operator and types a number for a MS resident or business. The Relay operator then calls that number and announces themselves by stating "This is Mississippi Relay. Have you received a Relay call before?". If a customer answers yes, then the call proceeds. If the answer is no, then the operator will explain that the other person is hearing disabled and is using a Text Telephone (TTY) to type to the operator, and the operator is relaying the call as read. The operator will then proceed to relay the message from both sides.

What devices do I need to be able to place a Relay call?
The most common device used by a hearing person is a standard telephone. For a deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired individual, the most commonly used device is a TTY (text telephone device). However, the equipment you need may vary depending upon the type of relay service you use. A VCO phone may also be an option. For more information on how to obtain a device in your area that meets your specific needs, call Relay Customer Service at 1 800-676-3777.

How much does Relay cost?
There is no charge for using Mississippi Relay within your local calling area. Long-distance call rates are determined by the carrier of choice (your long distance telephone provider). When you place intrastate, interstate, or international calls, Mississippi Relay can give you a number of billing options. Please notify the Relay operator of your preferred billing option: # direct, collect, third party, local exchange carrier (LEC) calling card, other long distance calling card, or prepaid phone card.

Will my calls be confidential?
All Relay calls are strictly confidential. Federal law requires strict confidentiality on the part of Communication Assistants (CAs). Therefore, no part of the conversation that takes place between 2 callers is revealed or stored in written or verbal form.

For TTY Users  A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, or speech-disabled uses a TTY to type his/her conversation to a Communication Assistant (CA), who then reads the typed conversation to a hearing person. The CA relays the hearing person's spoken words by typing them back to the TTY user.

1. Dial the TTY number, 711 or 1-800-582-2233.
2. Mississippi Relay will answer with "8234" (for CA identification), "F" or "M" (for CA gender) and "NUMBER CALLING PLS GA." ("GA" means "go ahead")
3. Type in the area code and telephone number you wish to call and then type "GA"
4. The Communication Assistant will dial the number and relay the conversation to and from your TTY.
   Type in "GA" at the end of each message.

For Voice Users  Standard telephone users can easily initiate calls to TTY users. The Communication Assistant types the hearing person's spoken words to the TTY user and reads back the typed replies.

1. Dial the voice number, 711 or 1-800-855-1000.
2. You will hear, "Mississippi Relay CA (number). How may I help you?"
3. Give the CA the area code and telephone number you wish to call and any further instructions.
4. The CA will process your call, relaying exactly what the TTY user is typing. The CA will relay what you say back to the TTY user. (Be sure to talk directly to your caller, avoid saying "tell him" or "tell her," and say "GA" at the end of your response.)
Comparison of American Sign Language with the English Language

**American Sign Language (ASL)** is a language that many Deaf persons use. Gaining knowledge about differences between ASL and the English language can help prevent possible misconceptions about the abilities of people who use ASL.

When communicating with a Deaf person using a **TTY (text telephone) communication device** or a Relay Service, typed messages are sent back and forth, through the telephone lines or the internet. The typed words will appear on the TTY’s LCD screen. Some TTYs have the ability to print the typed message.

To someone who is unfamiliar with ASL, the writing of Deaf people whose native language is ASL may appear to be incorrect. This is because ASL is **not English**. Like most other languages, ASL’s grammar and syntax is not related to the English language. Their writing will reflect their vocabulary in ASL’s format of grammar and syntax. For this reason, avoid “judging” Deaf people’s ability according to their written English skills. When a foreigner, who is not fluent in English, writes English words that follow the grammar and syntax of their native language, the English may appear to be incorrect. The same situation may arise when Deaf people write English in ASL syntax. Additionally, English, being a complex auditory language, requires years of exposure to fully learn and Deaf people do not have this opportunity. Knowing this, hearing people should be prepared to ‘simplify’ the language they use when using a TTY by keeping sentences short and clear and being aware of the vocabulary used.

**Specific examples of differences between ASL and the English Language** are listed below. In ASL:

1. sentences generally do not use articles (i.e., a, an, or the) before nouns
2. adjectives may appear after nouns
3. time indicators may appear first in a sentence
4. verb tense may seem to be non-existent
5. prepositions may be dropped
6. suffixes may be dropped or possibly added in unusual ways

Although these differences may appear to be mistakes, they only demonstrate one’s lack of familiarity with English Language.

If you do not have a TTY, a **Relay Service** can be used to communicate with someone who is Deaf. In this situation, the Deaf person types their message with the TTY and the Relay Operator then reads (relays) it over the telephone. **Relay Operators always relay the exact words they hear or read from the TTY**. Just as when a Deaf person communicates with TTY, the sentence structure and word usage may appear very different than if one communicated in English.

If a **Sign Language Interpreter** is used to assist in communicating with a Deaf person, the differences between ASL and English would not be evident because of the interpreter’s involvement. An interpreter’s job is to change English into ASL grammar and syntax, and vice-versa, helping to make the communication between both parties clear.