

Student Life

Student Disability Services Policy Manual

2026-2027

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Introduction

On behalf of the Student Disability Services team at Florida Southern College, we would like to warmly welcome you. We are excited that you are here and proud to support you as an important part of the FSC community.

Access and inclusion are essential parts of the college experience. Our office is committed to ensuring equal access to programs, services, and opportunities across campus. We strive to create an environment that is welcoming, responsive, and knowledgeable about campus resources so that you can fully engage in your academic and co-curricular journey.

We encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities available at FSC. Whether you are joining one of our 110+ student organizations, attending a campus event, connecting with faculty during office hours, or cheering on the Mocs at an athletic competition, your experience here is yours to shape. Student Disability Services is here to partner with you, provide reasonable accommodations, and empower you to advocate for your needs.

Students registered with our office are encouraged to stay engaged in the accommodation process and communicate proactively with professors and staff. Our policies and procedures are designed to uphold equity, foster independence, and support academic access. Please take time to review these guidelines so you feel confident navigating your accommodations.

Here's to a year of growth, achievement, and opportunity — go Mocs!

Dr. Sandy Calvert, Assistant Dean of Student Disability Services

Amanda Koester, Disability Services Access Coordinator

Student Disability Services

Student Life

Student Disability Services Mission and Vision

Florida Southern College Welcomes All Students Seeking to Further Their Education.

Accordingly, Florida Southern College prohibits discrimination against any qualified student with a disability. We invite students to visit Student Disability Services (SDS) to discuss their use or need of accommodations and any barriers they anticipate or may be experiencing at FSC.

Florida Southern College values diversity and prioritizes equal access for all students, including those with disabilities. The Office of Student Disability Services collaborates with FSC students, faculty, and staff to promote access to, and engagement in, the full range of college experiences, which are designed to prepare students to make a positive and consequential impact on society. Student Disability Services delivers reasonable accommodations through interactive and dynamic relationships, addressing barriers to access and full participation, and creating equitable and inclusive environments for learning and community membership.

Student Disability Services at Florida Southern College is a campus leader in promoting accessible learning and living, interactive communications, and welcoming facilities. Student Disability Services facilitates student acquisition of the resources, tools, and technologies that provide full access to the complete educational experience. Student Disability Services shares the timeliest evidence and guidelines on student disability support practices, and fosters conversations about student disability services and experiences, strengthening relationships among Student Disability Services, students, faculty, and staff. Consequently, Florida Southern College students with disabilities are fully engaged learners who thrive as global citizens.

Roles

For Students

Through collaborative efforts, the Office of Student Disability Services arranges reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Student Disability Services provides support for students with disabilities through an interactive, individualized process. SDS empowers students with disabilities to succeed in their pursuits of higher education by assuring equal access and opportunity to curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Student Disability Services encourages self-advocacy and maintains student-centered communication. In addition, Student Disability Services serves as a liaison to direct students with disabilities to other student-based support services at the College.

For staff, faculty, and other personnel

The Office of Student Disability Services serves as a source of information regarding federal law pertaining to disabilities and equal access opportunities. Student Disability Services offers training services for faculty, staff, and others in the community. The office provides opportunities to educate members about inclusion, accessibility, and people with disabilities in higher education.

Office Information

Mailing Address:

Student Disability Services
Florida Southern College
111 Lake Hollingsworth Drive
Lakeland, FL 33801

Main Office:

Florida Southern College

Student Life – Carlisle Rogers Building

2nd floor – 243 & 244

Email: disabilityservices@flsouthern.edu

Phone: 863.680.4900

Staff:

Dr. Sandy Calvert, Assistant Dean of Student Disability Services

Amanda Koester, Disability Services Access Coordinator

Disability Laws in Postsecondary Education

The information below explains the legal obligations that postsecondary institutions have towards students with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are entitled by law to equal access to postsecondary programs.

The following information has been adapted from a resource provided by the National Deaf Center.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) applies for students with disabilities in grades K to 12. IDEA protects students' rights and ensures that schools serve their educational needs; IDEA requires that schools provide special education services to eligible students as specified in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). **Educational rights covered by the IDEA do not apply to students in postsecondary education; as such, college students with disabilities do not receive IEPs from their institutions.**

There are two laws that protect persons with disabilities in postsecondary education: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. No. 93-112, as amended) and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (Pub. L. No. 1001-336). According to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990), a student with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental impairment, has a history of impairment, or is believed to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, speaking, seeing, hearing, breathing, walking, caring for oneself, or performing manual tasks.

The Rehabilitation Act

Title V of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is generally regarded as the first civil rights legislation on the national level for people with disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a program access statute. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity offered by an entity or institution receiving federal funds.

Under Section 504, institutions are required to appoint and maintain at least one person to coordinate its efforts to comply with the requirements of Section 504. Individuals working in this office have the ongoing responsibility of assuring that the institution/agency/ organization practices nondiscrimination on the basis of disability and should be included in any grievance procedures developed to address possible instances of discrimination brought against the institution.

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. There are four main sections of the law: employment, government, public accommodations, and telecommunications. The ADA provides additional protection for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA is designed to remove barriers which prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities that are available to persons without disabilities.

Postsecondary institutions are covered in many ways under the ADA. Employment is addressed by Title I, and Title II addresses accessibility provided by public entities. Accessibility provided by private entities is addressed in Title III, and Title IV addresses telecommunications.

Miscellaneous items are included in Title V.

Amendments to the ADA, which took effect January 1, 2009, clarify who is covered by the law's protections. The ADA revises the definition of "disability" to more broadly include impairments that substantially limit a major life activity. The amendment also states that mitigating measures, including assistive devices, auxiliary aids, accommodations, medical therapies, and supplies have no bearing in determining whether a disability qualifies under the law.

The ADA in Relation to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Institutions that receive federal funds are covered under Section 504. The ADA does not supplant Section 504 but the ADA standards apply in those situations where the ADA provides greater protection. Therefore, postsecondary institutions must adhere to both the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Rights and Responsibilities

Students with diagnosed disabilities have the right to:

1. Equal access to programs, services, and activities as other students. This includes the right to reasonable modifications and protection against discrimination based on a disability.

Students with diagnosed disabilities are responsible for:

1. Contacting Student Disability Services begin a formal request for accommodations.
2. Submitting required documentation through an electronic format (JotForm) that demonstrates the need for accommodations to ensure equal access.
3. Completing an interactive process meeting to determine reasonable accommodations.

4. Signing a consent waiver to allow Student Disability Services to communicate their accommodations with the appropriate parties.
5. Meeting with the appropriate faculty and staff to discuss approved accommodations.
6. Notifying Student Disability Services of any issues, concerns, or delays in receiving approved accommodations in a timely manner.
7. Meeting and maintaining Florida Southern College's fundamental academic and technical standards.

Confidentiality

Florida Southern College recognizes that student disability records contain confidential information and are to be treated as such. Documentation of a student's disability is maintained in a confidential file.

The Family Educational Privacy Act (FERPA) regulates disclosure of disability documentation and records by Student Disability Services. SDS requires written consent before releasing student documentation or information. FERPA provides numerous exemptions to the general requirement to seek student consent prior to releasing personally identifiable information from educational records. One of the exceptions authorizes SDS to release information to any school official who has a "legitimate educational interest." Another exception is for health and safety emergencies.

After the SDS interactive process, students are given the Florida Southern College Student Disability Services Consent Waiver. By signing the consent form, students authorize Student Disability Services to send a description of their approved academic accommodations to their course instructors and their academic advisor. There is also authorization to communicate with Community Living, Campus Safety, and other need-to-know community members for residential accommodations, including Emotional Support Animals. Students are given the opportunity to provide any additional contacts whom they permit to receive information about

their accommodations. Students may choose to refrain from signing this document if they would like to keep their information private. Consent Waivers are valid for each academic year.

For more information on FERPA waivers and policies, please visit the FERPA Policy section at <https://www.flsouthern.edu/about/policies/heoa-disclosures.aspx>.

Registration Process

SDS staff members work with admitted FSC students to ensure equal access to university programs and services. Whether they are making the transition from high school, community college, or another university, students should be aware of the accommodation request process as well as the accommodations that might be available to them on the basis of a disability or temporary health condition. To receive accommodations, students must complete a confidential registration process with Student Disability Services (SDS):

1. Inquiry made by student or referral by faculty/staff
2. Overview of process or required documentation provided
 - a. The registration form will ask students to submit documentation that establishes the nature of a disability. Additionally, students must have their healthcare providers complete the required SDS disability documentation form(s). SDS has specific documentation guidelines that target the information necessary to establish that a student has a disability and/or temporary health condition as part of the registration process.
3. Official documentation submitted by student through electronic registration process (JotForm)
4. Documentation reviewed by Student Disability Services
5. Interactive process with student to address accommodations, barriers, and College experience
6. Accommodations finalized and consent waiver signed
7. Accommodations shared with the appropriate faculty/staff

Once accommodations are established, they are applied proactively (rather than retroactively); students are advised to contact SDS as soon as possible.

- Newly admitted FSC students should start this process once they have received notice of admission.
- Currently enrolled FSC students should connect with SDS as soon as a need for accommodation arises.

Students are required to adhere to all stated deadlines. Failure to comply may affect eligibility or postpone the process to the next academic term.

Please note: The registration process traditionally takes between two to four weeks to complete, based on a number of factors, such as the availability of appropriate documentation, scheduling availability, and the nature of a student's request.

Interactive Process

Once a student's registration request and required documentation has been received, Student Disability Services will follow up to:

- Address any needed documentation, if any information in a request is incomplete
- Review and discuss proposed accommodations

These opportunities can be conducted in person, Zoom, or phone, when appropriate.

The student and SDS will engage in an interactive process to determine if the student is eligible for accommodations.

- If SDS determines that the documentation submitted is not adequate to support the existence of a disability or a need for the requested adjustment/accommodation, SDS will notify the student in writing within a reasonable time why the determination was made, and what additional documentation the student should submit to SDS to support their request.

- If SDS determines that a student is eligible for an accommodation, SDS will work with the student to identify an appropriate accommodation. SDS may consult appropriate faculty and other program personnel, as necessary, to determine all necessary and appropriate academic adjustments/accommodations based on the student's individual disability-related needs and the nature of the program(s) in which the student is enrolled.
- If SDS approves a student's requested accommodation(s), SDS will notify the student in writing, within a reasonable time of the student's approved accommodation(s)
- SDS will email Accommodation Plans to the student's instructors a week in advance of a semester start or within 2 business days after SDS approves the student for accommodation(s).

Activating Accommodations

Accommodations are legally mandated modifications, adjustments, auxiliary aids, and/or services that provide students with disabilities and equal opportunity to benefit from education. Students who are approved for any type of accommodation (academic, housing, ESA, dietary, other) will receive notification via email after the interactive process. Relevant personnel with an educational need-to-know, including but not limited to students' course instructors/advisors, Residence Life, Campus Safety, and/or Dining Services are notified by email of approved reasonable accommodations. Information about the student's diagnosed disability or chronic health condition will not be disclosed.

It is the student's responsibility to inform relevant parties (i.e. instructors) if they intend to use their accommodations. Student Disability Services recommends that students reach out to the appropriate parties within a week of receiving their accommodations.

Academic Accommodations

Documentation: Students have the responsibility to submit documentation electronically

through JotForm ([Academic Accommodation Request - Required Forms](#)). The appropriate healthcare professional should upload the Guidance Checklist Form and a Letterhead Diagnosis with accommodation recommendations. Students may also upload their 504 or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Accommodation Plans: After submitting the documentation and completing the interactive process, Student Disability Services creates an Accommodation Plan that lists the approved accommodations. The student signs a Consent Waiver for the school year to allow Student Disability Services to release their accommodations to the appropriate constituents (i.e. faculty, academic advisors). Faculty and advisors review the plan, then sign and return it to Student Disability Services.

FSC Audio Recording Agreement: Students permitted to audio record in class must sign and return an agreement form stating that the content recorded will only be used for course purposes and deleted when the course is completed.

Academic Accommodation Deadlines:

- Current/Returning Students (Once all required documents are received can take 7 business days for approval)
- Incoming Freshman (We encourage you to provide documentation immediately upon your acceptance to FSC)
- Students may request academic accommodations at any time throughout the semester

Housing Accommodations

Documentation: Students have the responsibility to submit documentation electronically through JotForm ([Single Room Accommodation Request - Required Forms](#)). There are two forms that must be completed and turned in: Certified Healthcare Professional Medical Single Form and Student Medical Single Form. Both forms must be submitted prior to the interactive process.

Possible Housing Accommodations (**Note:** Other accommodations are possible at the discretion of Student Disability Services. This list is not exhaustive and is based on housing availability)

- Animal-Free Living Space: Assigned to a living space, which includes the bedroom, bathroom, living room, and other common room space, that is free of animals
- Carpet-Free Living Space: Assigned to a living space, which includes the bedroom, bathroom, living room, and other common room space, that is free of carpet
- Emergency Alarm Notification: Notified of any scheduled alarm testing that will impact their assigned living space. Due to the nature of alarms, it cannot be guaranteed that a student will be notified prior to each alarm. All alarms must be treated as if the event that prompts the alarm is actually happening
- Extra Fridge: Student is able to provide their own extra mini-fridge for the living space (extra will not be provided by the college)
- First-Floor: Assigned to a living space that is on the first floor only
- Elevator Access: Assigned to a living space that has access to an elevator
- Kitchen Access: Assigned to a living space that has access to a kitchen within their residential community. This can either be through a community kitchen in the lobby or kitchen in an off campus living space
- Low-Use Restroom: Assigned to a living space that has a limited number of students who can also access the bathroom. Based on community availability, an eligible student could share a bathroom with one to six students
- Medical Single: Assigned to a bedroom that accommodates one student. Due to the nature of the residential communities, the college does not offer one-bedroom, one-bathroom living spaces on-campus or off-campus. Students who are seeking a private one-bedroom space will have to reside in an on-campus living space within a residence hall. Though a student will have a private bedroom, off-campus single rooms share a kitchen and living space with one to three other students
- Preferred Roommate: Student can request up to three preferred roommates who are eligible for their residential space. However, a student is only guaranteed one of their preferred roommates. This limitation is due to space availability

Common Reasons for Denied Housing Accommodations: Please see below for examples of common reasons for denied housing accommodations:

- Allergies and/or Asthma
- Anxiety
- Bad Experience with Roommates
- Food/Dining
- Lack of Privacy

Housing Accommodation Deadlines:

- Entering in the Fall
 - Current/Returning Students – March 1
 - Incoming Freshman – May 1
 - New Transfer Students – June 1
- Entering in the Summer
 - All Summer Students – April 1
- Entering in the Spring
 - All Spring Students – November 1

Students may request housing accommodations at any time throughout the semester, but if the request for an accommodation is made fewer than 60 days before the individual intends to move into College-owned housing, FSC cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual's accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy

Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Accommodation

Documentation: Students have the responsibility to submit documentation electronically through JotForm ([ESA Request - Required Forms](#)). There are two forms that must be completed and turned in: the Certified Healthcare Professional ESA Form and the Student ESA Form. Both forms must be submitted prior to the interactive process. Please refer to the [Emotional Support Animal Policy and Agreement](#) for more information.

ESA Accommodation Deadlines

- Current/Returning Students
 - Review Process can take 30-60 days
- Incoming Freshman
 - Review Process can take up to 60 days

Students may request an ESA at any time throughout the semester, but if the request for an accommodation is made fewer than 60 days before the individual intends to move into College-owned housing, FSC cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual's accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy

Service Animals

Florida Southern College has established a policy concerning Service Animals on campus. Please refer to the [Service Animal Policy and Agreement](#) for more information.

Other Accommodations

Other accommodations that don't fit into the above categories are submitted electronically through JotForm ([Other Accommodation Request](#)). A few examples of other accommodations: dietary, low use restroom, elevator access, etc.

Students may request other accommodations at any time throughout the semester, but if the request for an accommodation is made fewer than 60 days before the individual intends to move into College-owned housing, FSC cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual's accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy

Determining Reasonable Accommodations

According to the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, reasonable accommodations must be made to courses, programs, services, and/or facilities to ensure that

all students with disabilities have equal access to higher education opportunities. Students with disabilities may not be excluded from participation or denied opportunities on the basis of their disabilities.

Although the ADA mandates that reasonable accommodations are provided by institutions of higher education, it does not specify what constitutes reasonable. Therefore, it is up to the institution in conjunction with Student Disability Services to determine what accommodations would be reasonable for individual students. Since the accommodations process is an interactive, individualized process and accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis, certain accommodations may be deemed reasonable for some students but may be deemed unreasonable for others. The reasonableness of an accommodation is determined based on several factors, including a review of supporting documentation and collaboration between Student Disability Services, the student, and cooperating faculty/staff.

An accommodation may be denied by Student Disability Services if it is determined to be unreasonable. Some factors that could deem an accommodation unreasonable are if the accommodation(s): (1) fundamentally alters the nature of the program or course; (2) causes an undue financial or administrative burden on the university; (3) is considered a personal service; (4) could cause a direct threat to health or safety.

- Fundamental Program/Course Alteration
 - An accommodation is considered a fundamental alteration if it changes, or modifies, the content of the instruction. Accommodations should change *how* a student learns or demonstrates knowledge; they should not change *what* content a student learns or demonstrates.

In evaluating whether requested program/course accommodations would require substantial program/course alteration or would fundamentally alter academic standards, Student Disability Services considers the underlying academic reasons for the program/course components, the academic standards institutionalized in the program/course, how the challenged components are consistent with the program/course standards, and whether the requested

accommodations would be inconsistent with the academic goals and standards of the program.

- Undue Burden
 - An accommodation is considered an undue burden if it causes a substantial financial or administrative hardship on the College. The College is not required to approve accommodations or provide auxiliary aids and services if they constitute an undue burden. In determining whether an undue burden would be created, the factors to be considered are the nature and cost of the action needed in the context of the overall financial resources of the College. It is important to note that the ADA specifies that institutions of higher education cannot deny accommodations based on cost alone. If a request is determined to be an undue burden, the College will attempt to provide equal, but alternative, accommodation that fulfills the need.
- Personal Service
 - The College is not required to provide “personal services” to students with disabilities. Examples of personal services include but are not limited to: individual/private tutoring, personal care attendants, personally prescribed devices (hearing aid, glasses, wheelchairs), personal transportation, or personal assistance to transport books or other items. Students can contact Student Disability Services for referrals to departments and agencies that can provide personal services to fulfill their needs.
- Direct Threat to Health or Safety
 - The College is not required to permit an individual to participate in or benefit from a College program or service when that individual poses a direct threat or safety of themselves or others. A direct threat is a significant risk to health or safety that cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodations for policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services. In determining whether an individual poses a direct threat to health or safety, Student Disability Services will make an individualized assessment, based on

reasonable judgment that relies on current medical knowledge or the best available objective evidence, to ascertain: (1) the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; (2) the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and (3) whether reasonable accommodations will mitigate the risk. If faculty have a concern that an accommodation may pose a direct threat, particularly in clinical settings, they should contact Student Disability Services directly to discuss the situation, which may trigger a threat assessment.

Communications with Faculty and Staff

The Office of Student Disability Services acts as a liaison between students and faculty/staff. Student Disability Services provides an Accommodation Plan with approved accommodations for students registered in our office, then sends that information to the specific student, academic advisor, and faculty for the semester. Students are responsible for discussing their accommodations with relevant faculty and staff each semester after they receive their Accommodation Plan. Students should self-advocate by communicating their accommodation needs in a direct, professional manner. These communications should be done both in email exchanges and in-person communication when possible. If students need additional assistance to begin communication, then they must inform Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Students are not required to disclose their diagnoses or any additional medical information to faculty or staff. If faculty or staff have questions, students should refrain from oversharing and simply direct them to contact the Office of Student Disability Services. If there is concern or disagreement regarding the implementation of the approved accommodations, then students should contact the Office of Student Disability Services immediately.

Grievance Procedure

Florida Southern College has in place an internal grievance procedure for prompt and equitable resolution of challenges to the accommodations provided.

If a student disagrees with an accommodation decision, or believes they are experiencing discrimination because of a disability, the first step is to discuss this with Dr. Sandy Calvert, Office of Student Disability Services (SDS), Florida Southern College, Rogers Building 2nd Floor, 111 Lake Hollingsworth Drive, Lakeland, FL 33801, tel: (863) 680-4900; email: disabilityservices@flsouthern.edu. Students should notify SDS immediately or ideally no later than five (5) working days of discovering the need to reevaluate accommodations or explore the possibility of discrimination. This is so that, if there is any non-accommodation or discrimination happening, the college can take prompt steps to correct the situation. Often, clarification or resolution can occur in this initial stage. Allegations of discrimination will be investigated beginning within one (1) working day of this discussion and any modifications to Accommodation Plans will be submitted to appropriate College recipients within ten (10) working days of this Accommodation Plan Re-Evaluation. SDS will notify students of any unexpected or necessary timetables changes.

If resolution is not possible using the Initial Accommodation Plan Re-Evaluation process or if a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Initial Re-Evaluation, they may initiate an Informal Grievance. Informal Grievance should be directed to Dr. Sandy Calvert, Rogers Building Room 244, Florida Southern College, 111 Lake Hollingsworth Drive, Lakeland, FL 33901, tel: (863) 680-4900, email: disabilityservices@flsouthern.edu, who has been designated to coordinate compliance efforts for students with disabilities.

Under certain circumstances, the complainant can request a reconsideration of the investigation outcomes of the Informal Grievance. Request for reconsideration should be made in writing within five (5) working days of the complainant receiving the written Informal Grievance Outcome to Dr. Lauren Albaum, Vice President of Student Life, Rogers Building, Florida Southern College, 111 Lake Hollingsworth Drive, Lakeland, FL 33801, tel: (863) 680-4902; email: lalbaum@flsouthern.edu.