

# Handbook for Students with Disabilities At Park University

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Disability Services provided by:

Debra McArthur

Director of Academic Support Services

Dear Student,

Welcome to Park University!

At Park, we pride ourselves on our diverse student body that includes learners of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, and abilities. We welcome the opportunity to serve our disabled students with the accommodations they need to succeed.

Services for all disabled students (whether attending online, at a campus center, or in Parkville) are provided through the Academic Support Center. To find out more about our policies, documentation requirements, and services, please visit our website:

<http://www.park.edu/disability/>

We can do our best work only when we have your cooperation. This handbook is intended to provide you with the information you need to help us help you. Together, we can provide the support and services you need to accomplish your goals at Park University.

With best wishes for your success,

**Debra McArthur**

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Parkville Campus, Mabee 406  
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## Table of Contents

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Getting Started.....              | 4  |
| Documentation Review Process..... | 6  |
| Types of Accommodations.....      | 7  |
| Notifications to Instructors..... | 10 |
| Student responsibilities.....     | 11 |
| Helpful aids.....                 | 13 |
| Grievances.....                   | 14 |
| Tips for success.....             | 15 |

## Getting Started with Park's Disability Services

If you have recently left high school, you may be surprised to find that disability services work much differently at the college level. For information about the differences in delivery of services for students with disabilities between K-12 and higher education, you will find good information at the Missouri Association for Higher Education and Disabilities [MO-AHEAD] website: <http://www.moahead.org/> (click on "guidebook" on the site), and also at the website for the Office of Civil Rights, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>

If you have never registered as a student with a disability before, it is important to learn the correct procedure for going about it. We try to make the process as easy as possible for you, but it really helps things go more smoothly for everyone when students follow the process.

Here are the steps to follow:

- 1) Fill in and submit the "Student Request for Disability Services" form.

This lets us know a little about you, your needs, and how we can serve you. You can find the form at our policy website [www.park.edu/disability/](http://www.park.edu/disability/). Print the blank form, fill it out, then mail, fax, or scan and email to:

Debra McArthur  
Director of Academic Support Services  
Park University  
8700 River Park Drive  
Parkville, MO 64152  
Fax: 816-505-5445

Email: [debra.mcarthur@park.edu](mailto:debra.mcarthur@park.edu)

[If you have questions: call 816-584-6332]

- 2) Carefully read our policies and documentation requirements shown at <http://www.park.edu/disability/>
- 3) Submit your documentation, prepared according to the guidelines below:

### **Documentation Requirements**

Park University recognizes the best practices recommended by the national Association on Higher Education and Disability. We also realize that each individual and each disability is unique. Specific documentation requirements will vary according to the type of disability, but the following guidelines define acceptable documentation:

1. It is **prepared by a licensed professional** who is knowledgeable in the field of the student's particular disability, and provide a **description of the diagnostic methodology and/or a description of the diagnostic** criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests and dates of

administration, as well as a clinical narrative, observation, and specific results. Where appropriate to the nature of the disability, having both summary data and specific test scores (with the norming population identified) within the report is recommended.

**Learning Disabilities (LD/ADHD):** Students must provide supporting diagnostic test results from a licensed psychologist or certified specialist in learning disabilities. All testing should be based on **adult level norms**.

**Physical Disabilities:** Students must provide documentation from a physician that specifies the nature of the disability or disabilities.

**Psychiatric Disabilities:** Students should provide documentation from a licensed professional qualified to diagnose and treat psychological disorders.

2. It is **no older than three years**. (Certain long-term medical and health conditions may not be subject to this element. ex: blindness). Park University will evaluate, but may reject, documentation over three years old. We reserve the right to request updated verification of disability and necessary accommodations.

3. It **includes a statement of diagnosis**.

4. It includes a description of the student's **current functioning** and/or the **current status** of the disability.

5. It describes how the disability **affects the student's learning/functioning** in a post-secondary **educational** setting.

6. It includes recommendations for appropriate **post-secondary accommodations**.

7. It is **dated and signed by the licensed professional** and presented on letterhead of the professional.

8. It should **include information regarding medication** the student may be using **and treatment** he/she may be undergoing. This also should include the medication or treatment's impact on the student's ability to function in an academic setting.

You may need to contact your doctor, psychologist, school counselor, VA counselor, or other qualified medical/educational professional to send your information. Use the same contact information shown above. Your information will be handled appropriately to protect your confidentiality. **[Please note: your submission of the Request form begins the process, but no accommodations can be determined or provided until the documentation is received.]**

- 4) Become familiar with the information in this handbook, so you will know how and when your instructors are notified, how accommodations are arranged, and other important aspects of receiving your services.

## Documentation Review Process

Once your documentation is received, the Director of Academic Support Services will review it and determine appropriate accommodations. If your documentation does not satisfy the requirements above, you may be asked to submit updated or more complete information. **Be sure to submit your documents in a timely manner to allow adequate time for the review process before the term begins.**

When your documentation has been reviewed, you will receive notification of the approved accommodations. If you are a student on the Parkville campus, your accommodations will be handled by Debra McArthur, Director of Academic Support Services. If you attend a different campus, your Campus Director will work with you on providing the accommodations. Online students will work with Debra McArthur, and may also work with a Park University campus center for proctoring.

If you are not satisfied with the accommodations you have been granted, please call Debra McArthur to discuss the situation. In some cases, we may be able to make adjustments. In others, additional documentation may be needed.

For more information on filing a grievance, please see the details on page 13 in this Handbook for Students with Disabilities.

DO NOT ask your instructor, campus director, regional director, or proctor to provide accommodations if you have not first submitted a Request for Disability Services form and documentation to the Director of Academic Support Services. Please keep in touch with us to let us know how you are doing, and inform us immediately if you need additional assistance.

Your disability information is CONFIDENTIAL. We will inform the appropriate faculty or campus personnel of the accommodations you require, but we do not disclose the nature of your disability. In some cases, you may find that sharing this information with your instructors may help them understand you better, but that choice is up to you.

**NOTE: Disability files are updated each year at the beginning of the spring and fall terms. If you are not enrolled for the current term, your file will be marked "inactive," and you will be notified by email. To reactivate your file and your accommodations, simply notify the Director of Academic Support Services by email when you enroll again.**

### **Debra McArthur**

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## Types of Accommodations

Accommodations are always determined to fit the specific needs of the individual student and in consideration of the documentation received. In deciding upon accommodations we consider:

- The disability/disabilities of the student
- The recommendations of the medical professional who diagnosed the disabling condition(s), as specified in the documentation
- Federal guidelines
- Best practices of disability services in higher education
- Departmental requirements
- The academic integrity of our degree programs

Below are just a few types of accommodations:

Testing accommodations (extended time, low-distraction room, etc.)

Alternative texts (usually this means electronic files of texts that can be read aloud by a screen reader) for those with print disabilities such as blindness, dyslexia, etc. Students can also contact Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic <http://www.rfbd.org/> . Membership is FREE, and RFBD provides books on audio CDs or by download. You must have RFBDs software to access these. Software prices begin at \$20.

Permission to record lectures or a note taker for individuals unable to take their own notes  
[applies to students in face-to-face classes]

Sign language interpretation or captioning for deaf students

Scribe for tests (or permission to type answers to exam questions)

Reader for tests

NOTE--“Extended time for tests” **does not** automatically imply extended deadlines for class assignments. Students are expected to manage their own time to allow for completion of work by established deadlines. In some cases, disabled students may receive the details of assignments early in order to help them meet deadlines. If you are taking classes in an accelerated format (i.e. eight-week terms), you should plan your weekly allotment of study time accordingly. If you are experiencing difficulty meeting deadlines in a course, you should discuss the matter with your instructor to determine if deadline extensions are reasonable. If deadline extensions are allowed, they may not extend beyond the closing date for the course, unless the student has completed a Contract for Incomplete with the approval of the instructor.

Requests for course waivers or substitution (example: waiver of foreign language requirement for a deaf student) will be considered individually. Approval for such waivers is granted by petition to the academic division and with approval of the respective dean and/or provost. The Director of Academic Support Services cannot approve or deny course waivers.

# Service Animal Policies at Park University

## General Guidelines

Service animals may accompany students, employees, and visitors with disabilities to Park University events, activities, and locations with rare exceptions. Local, state, and federal laws regulate the use of service animals at Park University.

1. **Definitions** Service Animal: According to the U.S. Department of Justice, *service animal* means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.
  
2. On a case by case basis, Park University may also permit the use of a housebroken miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability. Persons wishing the University to consider use of a miniature horse should please contact Debra McArthur, Director of Academic Support Services.
  
1. **Specific Provisions** Generally, Park University will permit the use of a service animal by individuals with disabilities. Park University may ask an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from the premise if (1) the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it; or (2) the animal is not housebroken. If a service animal is properly excluded under this provision, the individual with a disability will be given the opportunity to participate in Park University's service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises.
2. A service animal may be excluded if Park University makes an individualized assessment based on reasonable judgment and best available objective evidence that the service animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications.
3. A service animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal.
4. A service animal must be under the control of its handler (*e.g.*, harness, leash, voice control, signals, or other effective means).

5. A service animal may accompany an individual with a disability to all areas of Park University's facilities where students, members of the public, and participants are allowed to go.

## Notification of Accommodations to Instructors

Some students are reluctant to register with the office of Disability Services because they may be accustomed to the system used in their high schools where all teachers were informed of their disability. In college, this is not the case. **Your disability information is considered confidential.** The nature of your disability will not be disclosed nor discussed with instructors unless you specifically request it. [If you DO want your disability to be disclosed, we will ask for your written permission to do so.]

Instructors, however, do need to know what accommodations they need to make for you in the classroom or for testing. Proctors also need to know the appropriate adjustments to make for a disabled student.

This is what we do:

Near the beginning of each term (i.e. Fall, Spring, Spring 2, etc.) the Director of Academic Support Services will send an email notification to the instructors of all classes for which you are enrolled. The email will be addressed to the instructors, with a copy to you, and one to me. The letter will tell the instructor what accommodations are to be provided for you. If you are registered at a particular campus center, the campus center director will also be notified.

This is what you need to do:

- Watch for the email messages to go out each term, and check them over carefully.
- Read the message all the way through, as there is information for you in the letter, too.
- Check to be sure that ALL your instructors were sent the message. NOTE: Notifications for online classes, campus center classes, and Parkville Daytime classes are sent in separate messages, so more than one message may be sent for you. It may take several days before all messages are sent.
- Be sure your proctor also received the message. If you are proctored somewhere besides a campus center, you will need to let me know, so that I can notify your proctor.
- NOTIFY ME immediately if any of your instructors were left off the email.
- NOTIFY ME immediately if you change your class schedule, as I do not receive any other notification of this unless you tell me.

Some special considerations:

If you do not enroll by the confirmation deadline of the Fall or Spring term, your file may be marked "inactive" and your name removed from my list of active students. Your information is still on file with us, however. Just remember to let me know when you enroll again, so that I can re-activate your file.

When you graduate (hooray!), your file will be marked “inactive.” If you decide to continue with Park for graduate school, notify me so I can continue to provide you with services.

## Student Responsibilities

As a college student with a disability, you are considered an adult. As such, you will be expected to advocate for yourself and accept responsibilities that you didn't have if you received disability services in high school. I cannot discuss your accommodations or your academic progress with your parents, unless you have submitted a signed release (FERPA form) to the school.

These are things you should do for yourself:

- Know the procedures in this handbook and be sure you are following the correct process in requesting services.
- File your request form and submit your documentation in a timely manner. Do it BEFORE the term begins, not the week before final exams.
- Discuss your accommodations with your instructors (outside class). This may include reminding them a few days before an exam if they are supposed to send your test to the Testing Center or to campus center staff for proctoring. Refer them to me if they have questions about your accommodations.
- If you are approved for “audio texts,” these will be requested as electronic versions of the book that may be read by a screen reader. You will need screen reading software on your computer to access these. [See the Helpful Aids page for more information about screen readers.] We use a service called Access Text. Each term I will need the following information for each book you require:
  - 1) Course number, title, and instructor
  - 2) Title of book and edition
  - 3) Author(s)
  - 4) ISBN number
  - 5) Proof of purchase (this is required by the publisher) [This may be your MBS receipt or an email confirmation of purchase or rental.]

Send this information as soon as you can. It can take anywhere from a few days to a couple of weeks (or longer) to get the files, especially when we have to go directly to the publisher for them.

NOTE: You may choose to use Learning Ally (formerly Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic) instead of Access Text if you wish. Go to <http://www.learningally.org/>, enroll for a membership, and then search LA's library and order books directly from them. Individual memberships are \$99 for the year. LA does not require proof of purchase to use their audiobooks. You do need their software, however, to use their CDs. The software is available for purchase on their website.

- Plan ahead for accommodations for your final exams. If you take online classes, be sure your proctor knows and can provide the appropriate accommodations. If you take face-to-face classes at a campus center, talk to the person who will proctor your tests. You may

- need to be flexible in scheduling your exams so that adequate time and an appropriate place are available for you. If you will be proctored on the Parkville campus, you must make your arrangements directly with the Director of Academic Support Services, since the Testing Center cannot handle your accommodations during finals week.
- If you think you need additional accommodations besides those originally approved for you, talk to me about it. I'll be glad to review your accommodations with you to see if we can grant your request. In some cases, you may be able to submit additional documentation in order to qualify for other services.
  - Be cordial and respectful to your instructor in your requests. An angry email or phone conversation seldom helps your case. Disrespectful behavior toward your instructor or campus center director may put you in violation of the Student Conduct Code.
  - If you believe you are not being provided the accommodations approved for you, let me know right away. Don't wait until the last week of the term when it may be too late to solve the problem and save your grade.
  - Manage your study time to allow for your disabilities. If reading and/or writing is a slow process for you, be sure to begin early. If you have ADD, arrange for a low-distraction environment in which to concentrate on your schoolwork and allow enough time to give yourself breaks when needed.
  - If you are served by Voc Rehab or VA, talk to your counselor about equipment and services they may be able to provide to help you.
  - Look into computer hardware, software, and other devices that may help you in your school work. Some of these may be free and/or relatively inexpensive, and can make a big difference. [See the "Helpful Aids" page for more information.]
  - If you have a grievance with the way your disability services have been handled, follow the procedures in the Park University catalog. [See the "Grievances" page for more information.]

## Helpful Aids

Many high-tech and low-tech items are available to help students today, and some of these can be especially helpful for students with disabilities. Some adaptive equipment is available at campus centers, but we do not purchase hardware or software for students' individual use at home.

Here are some that you may find helpful for your personal use. Most are well within a student's budget, some are free, and some might even be provided by services like Voc Rehab, VA, or other groups, depending on your qualifications.

**Screen reading software.** There are many brands available. Some are quite expensive; some are moderately priced; some are free for download. If you are approved for "audio texts," this is usually provided in the form of an electronic version of the book (usually a PDF) that can be read aloud by a screen reader. One such program, available as a free download, is Natural Reader. The free version has limited features, but a more sophisticated version is available for a moderate price. Screen readers can also read information on web pages.

**Speech-to-text software.** This type of software uses a microphone and allows you to speak into the mic to produce written text. The most popular program is Dragon Naturally Speaking. It is available for about \$75. The software isn't a quick fix though—it takes some "training" to interpret the user's voice accurately, and it requires editing to correct some kinds of errors.

**Live Scribe.** This little gizmo is a pen and a digital recorder all in one. During class, you take notes on a special paper while the recorder captures the lecture. Later, you can touch the pen to any specific place in your notes and replay that part of the lecture. You can upload the recorded lectures to your computer, too. Prices vary according to the storage capacity, but Live Scribe is available for prices ranging from \$100-\$200 and can be purchased online or at Best Buy and other retailers.

**Key to Access.** This is a glorified MP3 player that comes loaded with a number of accessibility software programs that separately would cost much more than the Key itself. The beauty of it is the ability to take the programs with you to use on any computer. Nothing is actually downloaded to the computer; it's all accessed directly from the Key. It even can be used as a digital voice recorder. Software includes a talking word processor, screen reader, scan and read program, talking calculator, and more. It comes with a USB cord and ear buds. Go to <http://www.readingmadeez.com/products/keytoaccess.html> for more information. Priced at about \$350.

**Ear plugs.** Definitely on the low-tech end of the scale, but can be useful for students with ADD or ADHD who have difficulty tuning out distractions in order to concentrate during a test (or study time). While proctors do their best to provide a low-distraction environment for testing, very few sites have soundproof rooms or enough spaces to provide a private room for testing of each disabled student. For obvious reasons, proctors can't allow students to use MP3s or iPods with earphones during tests. Foam earplugs are soft, comfortable, and inexpensive. They don't block all sound, but they can successfully block the small things (ticking clocks, etc.) that can distract a person with ADHD. Much less expensive than noise-cancelling headphones and available at most drugstores.

## Grievances

If you believe you are not being provided with the accommodations for which you have been approved, or if you are not satisfied with the services provided for you, we have procedures in place that can help you.

As the Director of Academic Support Services, I'm your first contact.

If you are having difficulty with an instructor, a proctor, or campus center personnel, let me know. You can call me at 816-584-6332 or email me at [debra.mcarthur@park.edu](mailto:debra.mcarthur@park.edu) . In most cases, I can communicate with the person about your accommodations and settle the problem right away. Please let me know as soon as the problem arises.

If you are dissatisfied with the accommodations approved for you, let's talk about it. I can tell you if we can allow additional accommodations. I can let you know if we need some additional documentation in order to grant other accommodations.

If you believe that I have not provided you with the accommodations you should have, you may contact the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs with your complaint (contact information is below)

If you believe that lack of approved accommodations has negatively affected your grade for the class, you may file an Academic Grievance by following the procedure for Grade Appeal described in the current catalog, but including your claim of inadequate accommodations. In a grade appeal case related to disability accommodations, I will be consulted about the approved accommodations, notifications sent to instructors and proctors, and may be asked to confirm your disability for the appropriate Dean or the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs:

Dr. Daniel Donaldson  
Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs  
8700 NW River Park Dr  
Campus Box 5  
Parkville, MO 64152  
816-584-6846

## Tips for Success

**Follow the procedures** in this handbook, and submit your request form and documentation as early as possible. It takes time to process your request, notify instructors, and make arrangements for your accommodations. Requests received very late in a term may not be processed until the beginning of the following term.

**Know your own strengths and weaknesses.** Are you better at writing than math? Is procrastination a continuing problem for you? Knowing your own talents and shortcomings can help you strategize better ways to approach tasks. It can also help you know when you need to ask for help from a teacher, a tutor, or a classmate.

**Manage your time well.** Does it take you longer to read than your peers? If so, then be sure you can allot adequate time in your weekly schedule to keep up on assignments. Get started early on the assignments you know will take a long time. For every semester hour of undergraduate work, the average student should plan 2 hours a week of study time. For a full time student taking 12 hours of classes, that means 24 hours per week. If you are taking accelerated (8 week) classes, you must plan twice that much. If you have a reading disability or other disability that causes slowed processing of information, you must plan even more. Map out your time on a weekly plan sheet to designate regular study hours. Use a semester planning calendar to keep track of due dates of assignments and tests.

**Plan your schedule carefully.** Whenever possible, consider the balance of courses that you are taking in a single term. If one type of subject is most difficult for you, take only one of that type each term and fill out your schedule with less difficult classes. Discuss with your advisor (and possibly your voc rehab counselor) the possibility of taking fewer courses per term. It may take you longer to finish school, but you may experience less stress and be able to keep a higher GPA that way.

**Be proactive.** Always be looking ahead at future assignments, tests, and courses. What tasks can you begin early to reduce stress later? If you are having difficulty in a class, talk to your instructor and see how you can get help right away. Don't wait until you have failed several tests to seek help.

**Be your own best advocate.** Be ready to discuss your needs with your instructors. If you can help them understand you, you are likely to find them quite willing to work with you. Use resources that can help you, such as the Helpful Aids listed in this booklet and learning strategies that can help you compensate for areas of weakness. For example, James Madison University has created a "Learning Toolbox" for students with learning differences. Go to <http://coe.jmu.edu/Learningtoolbox/> to find strategies that can help you improve your study skills and memory.