

Handbook for Students with Disabilities

At Park University

[Rev. January 2024]

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,

Learner Access and Disability Services
Parkville Campus, Mabee Underground
Box 46
Parkville, MO 64152
email: disabilityservices@park.edu
Office hours: M-F, 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM CST
Phone: 816-584-6313

Table of Contents

Getting Started.....	4
Documentation Review Process.....	6
Types of Accommodations.....	7
Notifications to Instructors.....	11
Student responsibilities.....	12
Information about audio texts.....	13
Helpful aids.....	14
Grievances.....	16
Tips for success.....	17

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 a link to the form at our policy website <http://www.park.edu/disability> Fill out the PDF, then email as an attachment or print and mail or scan and email to:

Learner Access and Disability Services
Florenda Jarrard
Box 46
Park University
8700 River Park Drive
Parkville, MO 64152

Email: disabilityservices@park.edu

[If you have questions: call 816-584-6313]

- 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 (AHEAD). 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. **This information is only necessary if it is part of the justification for receiving recommended accommodations.**

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, Learner Access and Disability 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. Requests that are received in the last two weeks of the term/semester will become effective on the first day of classes for the next term/semester (exceptions can be made for sudden emergency situations and will be reviewed on a case by case basis).**

When your documentation has been reviewed, you will receive notification of the approved accommodations.

If you are not satisfied with the accommodations you have been granted, please contact our office 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 16 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 Learner Access and Disability Services and have received an approval email for your accommodations. 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 our office by email when you enroll again.

Learner Access and Disability Services
Parkville Campus Mabee Underground
8700 NW River Park Drive
Box 46
Parkville, MO 64152
email: disabilityservices@park.edu
Office hours: M-F, 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM CST
Phone: 816-584-6313

Some 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. (more details about this on page 13)

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

Readers/Scribes for tests (or permission to type answers to exam questions)

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. Learner Access and Disability Services cannot approve or deny course waivers.

We will also provide accommodations for campus activities. Contact us if you need services for plays, athletic events, graduation, club activities or other events.

Park University Student Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations Policy

Park University (“Park”) provides pregnant students with at least the same special services as it provides to students with temporary disabilities. Park prohibits the harassment and discrimination of students based on sex, which includes pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions, including breastfeeding. Park provides reasonable accommodations to qualifying students with disabilities, including disabilities related to pregnancy and childbirth. Please refer to Park’s Student Housing policy and agreement for information regarding pregnancy and parenting while living on campus.

Please refer to the full policy at the below link:

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

Service Animal Policies at Park University

General Guidelines

Bona fide 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.

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.
- **Partner/Handler:** A person with a service animal.

Service Animal Policies

- (a) *General.* Generally, Park University ("Park" or "University") shall modify its policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a service animal by an individual with a disability.
- (b) *Exceptions.* Park may ask an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from the premises 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.
- (c) *If an animal is properly excluded.* If Park properly excludes a service animal under the provisions of (b), it shall give the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises.
- (d) *Animal under handler's control.* A service animal shall be under the control of its handler. A service animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (*e.g.*, voice control, signals, or other effective means).

- (e) *Care or supervision.* Park is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal.
- (f) *Inquiries.* Park may make two inquiries to determine whether an animal qualifies as a service animal. Park may ask if the animal is required because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. Park shall not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal. Generally, Park may not make these inquiries about a service animal when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability (*e.g.*, the dog is observed guiding an individual who is blind or has low vision, pulling a person's wheelchair, or providing assistance with stability or balance to an individual with an observable mobility disability).
- (g) *Access to areas.* Individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by their service animals in all areas of a Park's facilities where members of the public, participants in services, programs or activities, or invitees, as relevant, are allowed to go.
- (h) *Surcharges.* Park shall not ask or require an individual with a disability to pay a surcharge, even if people accompanied by pets are required to pay fees, or to comply with other requirements generally not applicable to people without pets. If Park normally charges individuals for the damage they cause, an individual with a disability may be charged for damage caused by his or her service animal.

Assistance Animal Policies at Park University

Park University (“Park” or “University”) recognizes the importance of “Service Animals” as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and the broader category of “Assistance Animals” under the Fair Housing Act that provide physical and/or emotional support to individuals with disabilities. Park is committed to allowing individuals with disabilities the use of a Service Animal on campus to facilitate their full-participation and equal access to the University’s programs and activities. Park is also committed to allowing Assistance Animals necessary to provide individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University housing. This Policy explains the specific requirements applicable to an individual’s use of an Assistance Animal in University housing. Park reserves the right to amend this Policy as circumstances require. This policy applies solely to “Assistance Animals” which may be necessary in University housing. It does not apply to “service animals” as defined by the ADAAA.

Although it is the policy of Park that individuals are generally prohibited from having animals of any type in University housing, Park will consider a request by an individual with a disability for reasonable accommodation from this prohibition to allow an Assistance Animal that is necessary because of a disability and reasonable. However, no Assistance Animal may be kept in University housing at any time prior to the individual receiving approval as a reasonable accommodation pursuant to this Policy.

Park will not limit room assignments for individuals with Assistance Animals to any particular building or buildings because the individual needs an Assistance Animal because of a disability.

To request an Assistance Animal please contact by email Disabilityservices@park.edu or by phone at 816-584-6313

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.) our office 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 your Park student email account. 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.
- NOTIFY our office immediately if any of your instructors were left off the email.
- NOTIFY our office immediately **if you change your class schedule**, as we do not receive any other notification of this unless you let us know.

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 our list of active students. Your information is still on file with us, however. Just remember to let us know when you enroll again, so that we 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 our office so we 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 did not have if you received disability services in high school. Our office 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. Refer them to our office if they have questions about your accommodations.
- Plan ahead for accommodations for your final exams. If you need a proctored exam for 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 Learner Access and Disability Services.
- If you think you need additional accommodations besides those originally approved for you, talk to us about it. We are happy 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 us know right away. Do not 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.]

Information about Audio Texts

If you are approved for “audio texts,” these will be requested as PDF 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 we will need the following information for each book you require:

- Course number, title, and instructor
- Title of book and edition
- Author(s)
- ISBN number
- **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.

Other ways to acquire alternate format texts:

You may choose to use Learning Ally instead of Access Text if you wish. Go to <https://www.learningally.org/>, enroll for a membership, and then search their library and order books directly from them. **Learning Ally does not require proof of purchase** to use their audio books. You do need their software, however, but the reader is a free app. Note: Learning Ally does require documentation of disability. The cost tends to be much less than you would normally pay for your textbooks in a typical semester. You can apply for a “hardship waiver” if you cannot afford the membership fee.

A viable alternative to either system may be the purchase of an e-Reader. Users of Amazon’s Kindle can pay a monthly fee to use an audio reader program (called Audible), and many textbooks are available as e-Texts, and often the sale or rental price is considerably lower than the cost of the hard copy book. But investigate the audio capabilities of a device before you buy. At this time Barnes and Noble NOOK does not have any audio apps available. One note: this is an option for any student, and you do not need to be “approved” by this office for alternate text formats to use it.

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 a fee. 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, Amazon, and other retailers.

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.

Your first point of contact is to email disabilityservices@park.edu and inform us of your grievance

If you are having difficulty with an instructor, a proctor, or campus center personnel, let us know. You can call our office at 816-584-6313 or email us at disabilityservices@park.edu. In most cases, we 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. Our office can tell you if we can allow additional accommodations. We can let you know if we need some additional documentation in order to grant other accommodations.

If you believe that Learner Access and Disability Services has not provided you with the accommodations you should have, you may contact the Associate Director of Academic Success with your concern. Your concern will be reviewed by the Associate Director of Academic Success and the Director of Academic Success for resolve. If needed, the concern can be sent to the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs for review.

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, our office 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:

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. Consider carefully how many semester hours you should take at a time. For some students with disabilities, a less-than-full time load is better.

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 university resources available to you such as mentoring and tutoring services.