Welcome!

Welcome to The University of Alabama Office of Disability Services. Our mission is to serve as the central campus resource for students who wish to request academic accommodations. In collaboration with students and instructors, our staff coordinate accommodations and support to ensure equal access to an education. On behalf of the ODS team, we look forward to working with you during your time as a student.

This handbook is intended to serve as an important resource for you as you progress through the accommodations process each semester. To ensure we are providing the most current information, ODS periodically updates this handbook to reflect changes in policies, procedures and services. The most up-to-date version of this handbook will be available on the ODS website (www.ods.ua.edu) for your reference.

Thank you for taking the time to browse through the important information we provide on the following pages. If you have any questions about the information you review, please contact us.

Best wishes in your academic journey!

Vanessa Goepel, MA, LPC-S
Director
Office of Disability Services
# Table of Contents

- Contact Information ........................................................................................................................................... 3
- Hours of Operation ............................................................................................................................................... 3
- Confidentiality .................................................................................................................................................... 4
- Postsecondary Disability Law ............................................................................................................................. 5
- How to Register with ODS .................................................................................................................................. 6
- How to Initiate Accommodations Each Semester ............................................................................................... 7
- Distance Education Accommodations .................................................................................................................. 8
- Early College Accommodations ............................................................................................................................ 9
- Priority Registration ............................................................................................................................................ 10
- Exam Accommodations ....................................................................................................................................... 11
- ODS Testing Center Policies ............................................................................................................................... 12
- Note-taking Assistance ......................................................................................................................................... 13
- Note-taking Tools and Resources .......................................................................................................................... 14
- E-text and Alternative Formats .............................................................................................................................. 15
- Syllabus Modifications .......................................................................................................................................... 16
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services ....................................................................................................................... 17
- Accommodations for Clinical or Internship Requirements .................................................................................. 18
- Course Substitutions ........................................................................................................................................... 19
- Accommodations for Standardized or National Exams ....................................................................................... 20
- Communicating with Instructors ............................................................................................................................ 21
- Conflict Resolution ................................................................................................................................................ 22
- Requesting Copies of Documentation .................................................................................................................... 25
- Campus Resources ................................................................................................................................................ 26
- Emergency Preparedness ...................................................................................................................................... 27

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**A Note about Accommodation Approval:**

This handbook is comprehensive and therefore includes some accommodations which you may not be eligible to receive. In order to receive any accommodation(s), students must first discuss their needs with an Accommodations Specialist.

This handbook is available in alternate formats upon request to ods@ua.edu.
Contact Information

Mailing Address
1000 Houser Hall
Box 870185
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0185

Phone and Fax
Voice: 205-348-4285
Fax: 205-348-0804

Email and Web
ods@ua.edu
www.ods.ua.edu

ODS Testing Center
Phone: 205-348-2716
Email: odstesting@ua.edu

Hours of Operation

The ODS Office is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00am until 4:45pm. We close daily for lunch from 12:00pm until 1:00pm. Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment in order to ensure a staff member is available.

The ODS Testing Center is open Monday through Thursday, from 8:00am until 10:00pm and Friday from 8:00am until 4:45pm.

ODS observes designated university holidays and campus closures due to inclement weather and natural disasters. If the university is closed, ODS is also closed.
Confidentiality

Information related to a student’s disability and accommodations is protected, as students are entitled to confidentiality of this information under the Americans with Disabilities Act. ODS treats all student information as confidential, so a student’s diagnosis or approval for accommodations is never shared with others on campus, nor will this information appear on the student’s transcript or diploma. Information submitted to ODS by students is housed in ODS and only ODS staff have access to this information.

It is the student’s decision whether to share disability-related information with instructors or staff. Instructors or staff who do not work in ODS do not have a legal right to knowledge of a student’s diagnosis. Students who wish to request accommodations in a particular course are responsible for sharing their accommodation notice with the instructor, but this notice does not contain information about the student’s diagnosis, only their accommodations. ODS cannot release any information to parents, instructors, staff, or other individuals without the student’s written permission. ODS will confirm a student’s registration and approved accommodations on a need-to-know basis.

Students are given an opportunity to sign a FERPA release indicating to whom the university can disclose information from the student’s educational record, and what types of information can be shared. However, because information regarding a student’s disability and eligibility for accommodations is held separately from the educational record, the university’s FERPA release does not apply to ODS. Students who wish to give permission for ODS to communicate with parents, instructors, staff, or other individuals may do so by signing the ODS Release of Information upon meeting with an Accommodations Specialist.

ODS does not disclose disability-related information or use of accommodations to employers or external organizations without the student’s permission. Students must complete a Release of Information if they wish to request copies of their documentation or release of confidential information.

A Note to Parents and Guardians:

It is important to understand that students are considered to be adults once they enroll in courses. Therefore, the onus for requesting and arranging accommodations, and communicating with ODS and instructors, rests solely with the student. It is necessary for students to learn self-advocacy and communication skills in order to successfully make inquiries or express concerns regarding accommodations. Parents and guardians are encouraged to help their student practice these skills and to allow the student to accept ownership of the accommodations process, rather than abdicating this responsibility to family members.
Postsecondary Disability Law

For students who received accommodations in high school, it is important to understand some legal difference pertaining to accommodations in college. For students who have never received accommodations, it is helpful to have an understanding of the laws which inform your rights and responsibilities. Three legal mandates pertaining to students with disabilities include:

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (applies to the K – 12 setting)
- The Rehabilitation Act, Section 504
- The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended

Some of the differences among these laws are indicated in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the intent of the law?</th>
<th>Secondary Setting: 504 and IDEA</th>
<th>Postsecondary Setting: 504 and ADA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDEA: To provide a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to students with disabilities. 504: To ensure students with disabilities are provided access to all programs, services, activities.</td>
<td>504: To ensure students with disabilities are provided access to all programs, services, activities. ADA: To ensure no otherwise qualified person with a disability is denied access to, or benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination by programs, services, or activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is covered under the law?</td>
<td>Any student requiring special education services until age 21 or upon graduation from high school. Disability is defined by 13 IDEA categories.</td>
<td>Any otherwise qualified individual who meets criteria for entry to college and who can document the presence of disability as defined by the ADA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for identifying the need?</td>
<td>School districts are responsible for identifying, evaluating, and planning for education services at no expense to the parent or student.</td>
<td>Students are responsible for self-identifying to request accommodations, and for obtaining disability documentation from a qualified professional. The student assumes the cost of the evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for initiating service delivery?</td>
<td>School districts are responsible for identifying students with disabilities and providing special instruction, individualized education plans (IEPs), and/or accommodations.</td>
<td>Students are responsible for notifying ODS of the need for accommodation. Accommodations are provided to ensure equal access to programs, services, and activities. Personal services are not part of accommodation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW TO REGISTER WITH THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is the central campus resource for students who wish to request academic accommodations. In collaboration with students and instructors, our staff coordinate accommodations and support to ensure equal access to an education.

1. CONSULT DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

ODS can provide academic accommodations for:
- Cognitive disabilities (ADHD, learning disorders, traumatic brain injury)
- Psychiatric disabilities (anxiety, depression, Autism Spectrum Disorder)
- Medical disabilities (any chronic condition)
- Hearing and vision loss
- Mobility limitations

Documentation requirements are available at www.ods.ua.edu/documentation

2. COMPLETE ODS APPLICATION

Log in to the ODS Online Portal with your MyBama username and password to complete a brief application:
www.odsonlineportal.ua.edu

3. UPLOAD DOCUMENTATION

Use the portal to upload documentation as a PDF, which is the preferred method. Alternatively, you may use the following:
- Email: ods@ua.edu (please send a PDF)
- Fax: 205-348-0804
- Mail: Office of Disability Services, Box 870185, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0185
- In-person: Houser Hall 1000

If additional documentation is needed, you will be notified via Crimson email.

4. MEET WITH ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIALIST

You will receive an email requesting that you call ODS at 205-348-4285 to schedule an appointment with an Accommodations Specialist, who will talk with you about the impact of your disability and any accommodations you wish to request.

5. SEND FACULTY NOTIFICATION LETTERS

Use the ODS Online Portal to send a Faculty Notification Letter to instructors, outlining the accommodations you are eligible to receive in each course.

6. MEET WITH INSTRUCTORS

Meet briefly with instructors during office hours or by appointment to discuss a plan for receiving accommodations in each course. Instructors cannot begin providing accommodations until you have communicated your needs.

7. FOLLOW-UP WITH ODS AS NEEDED

Regularly check the ODS Online Portal and your Crimson email for important reminders. Promptly contact your Accommodations Specialist if you have questions or concerns. The ODS Student Handbook also contains additional details:
www.ods.ua.edu/student-handbook/
How to Initiate Accommodations Each Semester

Once a student has completed the registration process and has been approved to receive accommodations, it is the student’s responsibility to follow these steps at the beginning of each semester:

**Step 1: Review course requirements**
Analyze the requirements and design of each course by reviewing the syllabus and considering your individual needs. Some of your approved accommodations may not be appropriate or necessary for every class.

**Step 2: Send Faculty Notification Letters**
Use the ODS Online Portal to send a Faculty Notification Letter to each instructor from whom you need to request accommodation. You have the option to select only the accommodations that apply to each course.

**Step 3: Meet 1-on-1 with Instructors**
During office hours or by appointment, meet with instructors to review the Faculty Notification Letter and discuss how accommodations will be provided. You do not need to disclose the nature of your disability. **Remember:** Accommodations are not retroactive and therefore cannot be implemented until you have presented an accommodation notice to your instructor.

**Step 4: Remain in Communication with Instructors and ODS**
It is the student’s responsibility to arrange accommodations as needed. For example, students who receive exam accommodations should discuss with instructors how those accommodations will be provided in the course. If the instructor agrees to provide accommodations within the academic department, it is the student’s responsibility to know where and when to report for the exam, and it is beneficial to touch base with the instructor prior to each exam. If the instructor advises the student to receive accommodations at the ODS Testing Center, it is the student’s responsibility to schedule their exams.

The provision of accommodations is an on-going and collaborative process between the student, the instructor, and ODS. Students who have questions or concerns regarding accommodations should promptly communicate with their instructor and / or contact their Accommodations Specialist.
Distance Education Accommodations

ODS strives to implement accommodations for distance learners in a manner consistent with that of resident students. Requests for accommodation from distance learners require the same level of disclosure and follow the same procedures as resident students.

Students who wish to register with ODS for the purpose of requesting academic accommodations may do so by following the procedure below.

1. Consult the documentation requirements (http://ods.ua.edu/documentation/) and submit documentation to ODS in a timely manner. Once you have been accepted into a distance education program, you may proceed with completing an ODS application and submitting your documentation through the ODS Online Portal (www.odsonlineportal.ua.edu).

2. ODS will confirm via email that your documentation has been received, and will include instructions for scheduling an appointment with an Accommodations Specialist. Appointments occur via Zoom virtual meeting.

3. Prior to your appointment, your Accommodations Specialist will review your documentation and notify you via email whether additional documentation is needed.

4. At the agreed upon date and time, your Accommodations Specialist will initiate the Zoom meeting, and it is best if you can plan to be in a quiet, uninterrupted location during the appointment. The impact of your disability will be discussed and reasonable accommodations will be agreed upon, then relevant policies and procedures will be reviewed.

5. During your appointment, you will receive instruction on how to use the ODS Online Portal to send electronic Faculty Notification Letters to your instructors.

6. It is your responsibility to send electronic Faculty Notification Letters at the beginning of each semester and discuss with each instructor how your accommodations will be implemented. Distance learners should follow protocols for contacting instructors based on information provided in the syllabus regarding email or phone communication, virtual office hours, etc. Accommodations are not retroactive and cannot be implemented until instructors have received an accommodation notice and implementation has been discussed.

7. Any questions or concerns regarding accommodations should be discussed promptly with your Accommodations Specialist, who is available via phone or email.
Early College Accommodations

Early College students who wish to register with ODS for the purpose of requesting academic accommodations may do so by following the procedure below. ODS can implement accommodations for Early College students through in-person or Zoom meetings, depending upon whether the student is local to the Tuscaloosa area. Requests for accommodation from Early College students require the same level of disclosure and follow the same procedures as UA students enrolled in undergraduate programs.

1. Consult the documentation requirements (http://ods.ua.edu/documentation/). In some cases, it is allowable for ODS to accept an Early College student’s IEP or 504 plan as documentation. Once you have been accepted into Early College, you may proceed with completing an ODS application and submitting your documentation through the ODS Online Portal (www.odsonlineportal.ua.edu).

2. ODS will confirm via email that your documentation has been received, and will include instructions for scheduling an appointment with an Accommodations Specialist either in-person or via Zoom virtual meeting.

3. Prior to your appointment, your Accommodations Specialist will review your documentation and notify you via email whether additional documentation is needed.

4. During the scheduled meeting, be prepared to discuss the impact of your disability and the accommodations you wish to request. Relevant policies and procedures will also be reviewed.

5. During your appointment, you will be instructed on how to use the ODS Online Portal to send electronic Faculty Notification Letters to your instructors.

6. It is your responsibility to forward a copy of the accommodation notice to your instructor(s) at the beginning of each semester and discuss the implementation of accommodations. Accommodations are not retroactive and cannot be implemented until instructors have received an accommodation notice and implementation has been discussed.

7. Any questions or concerns regarding accommodations should be discussed promptly with your Accommodations Specialist, who is available via phone or email.

Early College students who are accepted to UA as an undergraduate student should contact their Accommodations Specialist to determine whether additional documentation is needed, and to schedule an appointment to discuss procedures for receiving accommodations in on-campus classes.
Priority Registration

All students who are registered with ODS, and whose files are determined to be complete, receive priority registration as an accommodation. Students are given early registration priority in order to provide access for the student to arrange their course schedule according to their individual needs, or in order to prepare for accommodations that require advanced notice such as alternate formats and services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

While ODS does ensure the student’s registration time ticket is updated to reflect the priority registration date, ODS is not involved in the academic advising process. Each semester, ODS will notify students via email of the priority registration date, but it is the student's responsibility to double-check their registration time ticket to ensure there are no holds that would prevent the student from registering, and to schedule an early advising appointment with their academic advisor.

ODS is not able to remove holds from a student's account, so students should regularly monitor their MyBama account and promptly address any holds that may appear. The Registrar’s office (registrar@ua.edu; 205-348-2020; 206 Student Services Center) can assist students with reviewing their registration time ticket and any holds that may appear.

ODS is unable to remove registration PINs or provide guidance regarding course or instructor selection. The student should meet with their assigned academic advisor in order to review degree requirements and discuss course selection, well in advance of the registration period. Students should consult DegreeWorks or the academic department of their major to determine their assigned advisor. Advising schedules fill up quickly, so students are encouraged to contact their advisor early each semester in order to complete the meeting before the priority registration date. Only the academic advisor can remove the registration PIN from the student’s account, so students who have not met with their advisor before the priority registration date will not be able to take advantage of priority registration. Some departments offer walk-in hours, and students may contact their academic advisor to check on availability.

Advising locations for each school or college can be viewed online:

https://registrar.ua.edu/student-services/registration/advising-locations/
Exam Accommodations

Students who experience limitations or barriers related to exams or the testing environment may be eligible for exam accommodations. Common examples include extended time on exams, taking exams in a reduced distraction environment, and use of technology for assistance with reading or writing during exams. Students who need to request exam accommodations should communicate with their Accommodations Specialist.

The ODS Testing Center serves as a convenience location to assist instructors with providing exam accommodations to students and offers the following:

- 50 private testing rooms
- Online exam scheduling through the ODS Online Portal
- Lockers for storage of belongings while testing
- Testing stations with computers
- Screen reading software
- Text-to-speech software

A Note to Students:
The ODS Testing Center is available as a convenience location for accommodated testing. It is not required that students take their exams at ODS. In fact, some departments may require students to test within the department and will have a plan for providing accommodations. ODS is unable to proctor every student who receives exam accommodations and scheduling occurs on a first-come, first-served basis. Students should promptly communicate with instructors to determine how exam accommodations will be provided, and should proactively schedule exams with ODS if necessary.
ODS Testing Center Policies

1. Tests must be scheduled at least 3 days prior to the test date. It is recommended that students schedule all tests, including finals, at the beginning of each semester. Students must schedule tests online through the ODS Online Portal: www.odsonlineportal.ua.edu

2. Testing space at the ODS Testing Center is limited, and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The responsibility of providing testing accommodations lies with the instructor, who may choose to offer accommodations within the department. Check with your instructor first.

3. If ODS testing space is full, notify your instructor immediately. Failure to request alternate arrangements may mean you will not receive accommodations on the test. Instructors may refuse testing accommodations if students fail to provide timely notice.

4. Tests must be taken at the same time as the class unless (a) back-to-back classes would prevent the student from receiving all extended time; or (b) the instructor informs ODS that rescheduling is permitted. Students should never miss one class to take a test in another.

5. Block scheduling is utilized for final exams, at times determined by the ODS Testing Center. Students should use the ODS Online Portal to request testing space for finals, and will be informed at a later date whether space is available. ODS fills requests in the order in which they are received.

6. Late arrival for tests will result in an automatic time reduction corresponding to the number of minutes the student is late. Students who are late for a test may not be allowed to start the exam at ODS or may need instructor permission to begin the exam.

7. If you need to cancel a test at ODS, you may do so through the ODS Online Portal or by contacting the ODS Testing Center at 205-348-2716. Requests to reschedule an exam must be approved by the instructor and will be rescheduled according to the instructor’s directions.

8. Snacks and beverages will be allowed in the testing rooms at the discretion of testing staff.

9. No tobacco products of any kind are allowed in the testing rooms.

10. Permission to leave the testing room during a test may be granted at the discretion of testing staff.

11. Lockers are provided for storage of all items not required for a test. All personal items, including hats, sunglasses, and jackets must be removed and placed in a locker when testing at ODS.

12. ABSOLUTELY NO PHONES OR WATCHES are allowed in the test rooms. All other devices not specifically approved by instructors are also prohibited.

13. Testing areas are monitored by security cameras. Instructors may view testing videos at any time. All suspicious activity will be reported to instructors.

14. If you are unable to schedule an exam using the ODS Online Portal, please email odstesting@ua.edu with any available information.
Note-Taking Assistance

In cases where a student experiences barriers or limitations related to note-taking, accommodations or assistance may be available. Students who need to request note-taking assistance should communicate with their Accommodations Specialist. Some helpful accommodations, strategies, and technologies are listed below.

**Note-taking Accommodations**
For various disability-related reasons, students may struggle to record all of the necessary lecture information in their notes. Some accommodations that can help level the playing field include access to an audio recorder, laptop or tablet. By recording, students are able to review parts of the lecture later in order to help with processing new concepts and supplementing their notes from class. By using a laptop or tablet, students may be able to take notes more quickly by typing or using a stylus, while recording the audio, importing PowerPoint slides, or drawing diagrams or concept maps. Additionally, some students need access to note-taking materials, such as PowerPoint slides, in an alternate format and ODS can facilitate this as well.

**Note-taking Strategies**
Many students struggle with note-taking skills such as how to structure their notes, how to abbreviate or use short-hand, knowing what information to write down, etc. Many instructors will provide PowerPoint slides or other materials that students should use to help guide their notes.

[The Capstone Center for Student Success (www.success.ua.edu)](http://www.success.ua.edu) can assist students in refining their note-taking skills. Their Learning Specialists offer workshops focused on skills related to listening, processing information during class, note-taking strategies, and using your notes to actively study.

**Note-taking Technologies**
There are many apps and productivity tools that can be helpful for note-taking. Because of the variety of options available, students are encouraged to identify the technology that best meets their needs and learning style. ODS provides a curated list of note-taking apps and other assistive technologies: [http://ods.ua.edu/resources/assistive-technologies/note-taking-apps/](http://ods.ua.edu/resources/assistive-technologies/note-taking-apps/)
Audio Note
- Type notes as you record, and your notes will be linked with the voice recording. You can highlight, playback, and sync with cloud services. https://luminantsoftware.com/apps/audionote-notepad-and-voice-recorder/
- 1 month free trial; $9.99 to purchase

Microsoft One Note and the Microsoft 365 Training Center
- Take notes on your laptop or tablet and organize them similar to a notebook. You can also record, draw with a stylus, or share from within this program. https://support.office.com/en-us/office-training-center

Google Keep and the G Suite Learning Center
- Use your Crimson email (which functions as a Gmail account) to stay organized and connected with Google Keep, which allows you to write or record voice memos. https://gsuite.google.com/learning-center/#/

UA Box and the UA Office of Information Technology (OIT)
- UA Box provides unlimited Cloud storage free of charge for currently enrolled UA students. Save notes, Word, Excel or PDF files and share or collaborate with classmates.
- Take advantage of many programs provided to you as a student by getting to know OIT! https://oit.ua.edu/software/

Reading and Literacy Tools
- Natural Reader is a free, online text-to-speech reader available as an online web application, or download the software for use with PDFs, Docx, TXT, and ePub files. https://www.naturalreaders.com

Digital Note-taking Tools
- Livescribe pens allow you to write notes and audio record simultaneously, syncing the audio with your writing. Notes can be uploaded for digital storage and audio replay. https://www.livescribe.com/en-us/
- Rocket Book notebooks with Frixion pens are used to write notes, then immediately convert to digital format by scanning the QR code in the notebook. Rocket Book will send your notes to the email account, cloud storage folder, or app of your choosing. Pages wipe clean and can be reused! https://getrocketbook.com/
E-text and Alternative Formats

E-text, or electronic text, is specially formatted text that can be read aloud using text-to-speech software or screen readers. Other examples of alternative formats include enlarged print or Braille materials. Students must be registered with ODS and approved for an accommodation of textbooks in alternate format in order to receive text conversion services. Students must also be currently enrolled at the University of Alabama at the time text conversion is requested.

Text conversion can be requested through the ODS Online Portal (www.odsonlineportal.ua.edu).

Students should be prepared to provide the following information when requesting e-text:

- Course
- Book title and edition
- Author
- Publisher
- ISBN
- Proof of possession (i.e., copy, screen shot, or image of receipt) attached to email message

While students are encouraged to submit their requests early to allow time for processing, materials cannot be released to students until proof of purchase has been submitted. Requests should be submitted a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the first day of classes for the term in which the text is being requested. There is a minimum turnaround period of 2 weeks for textbook conversions and up to 4 weeks for out-of-print editions, custom editions, and UA printed materials.

Students must notify ODS immediately of any scheduling changes (such as dropping a class) pertaining to a course in which text conversion has already been requested. As text conversion requests are complete, students will be notified via Crimson email and should promptly access materials electronically, or pick up at ODS if instructed to do so.

Students may not copy, reproduce, or distribute any of the materials, or allow anyone else to do so, as this is a violation of Federal copyright laws. Students will be advised if materials must be returned to ODS at the end of the semester. If students fail to return materials within 1 week of the last day of final exams during the semester in which the materials were issued, the student's account may be charged.

A commonly recommended text-to-speech program is Natural Reader (https://www.naturalreaders.com)
Syllabus Modifications

Some students experience chronic or unpredictable episodes related to their disability. Syllabus modifications provide a reasonable amount of flexibility during episodes to allow the student to complete course requirements. Examples include disability-related absences and making up missed assignments, participation points, and quizzes or exams. Students who need to request this accommodation should communicate with their Accommodations Specialist.

Attendance Modification Policy

Attendance is an essential component of postsecondary education and students are expected to comply with class attendance policies. When the nature of a student’s disability includes symptoms which could exacerbate unexpectedly, a reasonable modification to the syllabus may be provided as an accommodation. Syllabus modifications do not function as an attendance waiver and therefore do not cover excessive or habitual absences, or negate the attendance and participation requirements of the course. The student remains responsible for fulfilling the essential requirements of the course. Instructors are not expected to compromise essential course requirements or fundamentally alter courses, regardless of a student’s disability.

What are the expectations for students using this accommodation?

Use of this accommodation requires prompt and collaborative communication between the student, the instructor, and ODS. The student should meet with each instructor at the beginning of each semester to discuss syllabus policies and complete the Attendance Modification Agreement outlining the reasonable modification that can be provided in the course. The Attendance Modification Agreement can be accessed by the instructor through the ODS Online Portal. Accommodations related to attendance are not retroactive. Like other accommodations, they become effective after the student delivers the accommodation notice from ODS to the instructor and discusses the accommodation.

As the student needs to use the absence accommodation, the student should:

1. Email the instructor as soon as possible to state they are using a disability-related absence and initiate arrangements for making up any missed work. If missing multiple classes, the student will need to email each instructor. Students are not required to disclose confidential information to their instructors, but can simply state "I need to use a disability-related absence from class today" or "I need to miss class today due to my disability."

2. Copy (CC) their Accommodations Specialist on email communications to the instructor(s). Students are responsible for notifying ODS of the use of this accommodation in addition to notifying instructors.

3. Failure to follow these steps may result in an unexcused absence in the course.
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

ODS offers a variety of accommodations for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, including sign language interpreting, real-time captioning or CART, and closed captioned videos.

The Sensory Accommodation Specialist works with students to determine the specific course-related needs. As students register for courses, the Sensory Accommodation Specialist facilitates access by arranging interpreters or transcriptionists to be present in the classroom or online, while also notifying instructors of the use of interpreting or CART, in addition to the need for closed captioned videos.

Permitted ASL interpreters are available in the Tuscaloosa and surrounding area, in addition to video remote interpreting (or VRI). Transcriptionists are available to provide CART (Communication Access Real-time Transcription) either in the classroom or remotely.

Students are also able to request services for extracurricular or co-curricular events that are available to UA students. If the event you plan to attend has a contact listed for accommodation requests, please start by contacting that individual. If no event contact is listed, please reach out to Sensory Accommodation Specialist to inquire about interpreting or captioning for the event.
Accommodations for Clinical or Internship Requirements

Accommodations are initially determined based on the classroom or online setting, and are written to apply to those specific settings. As students approach their degree requirements related to clinical, fieldwork, or internship experiences, accommodations may be different and therefore students should notify their Accommodations Specialist to discuss their needs.

Approval for accommodations related to experiential or application-based requirements is determined based on an individualized assessment of the student’s needs, the requirements of the degree or program, and considerations related to the placement site. This process requires communication with the student in addition to the coordinator of the clinical, fieldwork, or internship experience. As with any accommodation request, ODS must ensure that accommodation would not fundamentally alter the degree or program requirements, or pose a health or safety concern at the site.

If reasonable and appropriate accommodation is approved, ODS will notify the coordinator, who will work with the student and the site to implement the accommodation.
Course Substitutions

In some limited circumstances, students may find it necessary to request a course substitution due to cognitive disorder. Students are encouraged to be proactive and begin exploring options 1 – 2 semesters prior to the semester in which they plan to take the specific course. The university’s [core curriculum requirements](#) can be viewed online. Students should note that the University does not grant course waivers or exemptions.

**Are foreign language substitutions available?**

ODS recommends that students begin by talking with their academic advisors and reviewing their degree requirements in Degree Works to determine how many foreign language credits may be required, and whether their academic department has determined that a Computer Science sequence may be completed in place of foreign language. Because the Computer Science sequence is often an option for students, it is usually unnecessary to request a course substitution. Students may also have the option of completing foreign language courses during the summer, or at a local college and transferring the credit to UA. Again, students should first talk with their academic advisor about the available options.

**Are math substitutions available?**

The academic requirements for each major are determined by the school or college, and the required math courses corresponding to a given major are usually deemed essential for reasons related to accreditation standards, or knowledge that will be necessary in order to pass licensure or certification exams or to enter the job market. Students are encouraged to talk with their academic advisor first to determine if any alternatives are available, such as completing math courses during the summer, online, or at a local college.

**What is the process for requesting a substitution?**

Once students have reviewed their degree requirements and discussed options with their academic advisor, if it is necessary to request a course substitution, the student should email ODS Director, Vanessa Goepel ([vanessa.goepel@ua.edu](mailto:vanessa.goepel@ua.edu)) and include the following information:

- State the type of substitution being requested
- State the disability-related need for the substitution
- Include any relevant details such as previous attempts or struggles with the subjects

The request will be reviewed, and if appropriate, a recommendation will be made to the academic department. The department has the right to review the curriculum to determine if a substitution is a fundamental alteration to the degree program, or what courses would be appropriate. The department makes the recommendation to the core curriculum committee, who will review the request. The student will be notified of the committee’s decision by ODS.
Accommodations for Standardized or National Exams

Students who are approved to receive accommodations, and who wish to request accommodations on a standardized or national exam, may request assistance from ODS. Examples of exams include: GRE, Praxis, GMAT, LSAT, NCLEX, and MCAT, among others. Here are some things to keep in mind when preparing to register for a standardized exam:

• The administering body for the exam may be national (such as ETS, which administers the GRE and Praxis) or UA-affiliated (for example, students taking the TEAS or comprehensive exams). Students should know this information before submitting a request to ODS.

• It is the student’s responsibility to review the application, documentation requirements, and procedures related to the exam. While ODS can assist with paperwork related to documentation or verifying use of accommodations at the postsecondary level, it is the student’s responsibility to complete and submit all other paperwork.

• Please note that accommodations on standardized tests are not granted by ODS. While ODS can assist in applying for accommodations, the decision of which, if any, accommodations to grant rests with the administering body. The administering body may have different documentation requirements than ODS, and sometimes it is necessary for students to obtain updated documentation.

• Begin the process early. It is advisable to request assistance from ODS a minimum of 4 weeks before you plan to register for the exam. Also plan for the time it may take to obtain updated documentation if necessary.

• Once you have reviewed and completed the exam application or registration materials, please submit copies to ODS (ods@ua.edu) for review. A staff member will contact the student to address any issues or provide the necessary information.
Communicating with Instructors

Students are responsible for communicating with their instructors about accommodations, and communication is also encouraged as a good practice for establishing and maintaining relationships with instructors.

**How to reach instructors**

- Visit their office hours, which should be included on the course syllabus and/or posted outside the instructor’s office. The office location will also be listed in the syllabus and/or the UA Directory. If you need to discuss accommodations, office hours are the best times to do so.
- Schedule an appointment if the instructor’s office hours conflict with your class schedule.
- Email your instructor if you have a quick question to ask. The instructor’s email will be listed on the syllabus. Use professional language (don’t treat the email like you would a text message) and be sure to list the course and section you are in. Allow 1 to 2 business days for a response.
- Call your instructor using the phone number provided on the syllabus. If you leave a voicemail, be sure to include your name, course and section number, and the number where your call can be returned. Please be sure your own voicemail box is set up and can accept messages.
- Some instructors may also offer virtual meetings using Skype or Zoom.

**Helpful tips**

- If you have a question or concern, try to address it with your instructor prior to contacting ODS.
- Do not wait to discuss a problem. Promptly address problems with your instructor.
- Discussing a problem with your instructor right before or right after class is not always the best approach. Make use of office hours.
- If you call or email your instructor, allow time for a response. Do not expect a response outside of standard business hours.
- It is your responsibility to communicate with instructors and ODS. Don’t rely on others to do this for you.
Conflict Resolution

The process of providing accommodations is a collaborative one between the student, the instructor, and ODS. Students should review the steps and procedures listed below, noting the difference between each.

Accommodation Dispute Process

The following process applies to accommodation requests that are denied by ODS.

In order to offer a good faith discussion of the student’s needs in conjunction with The University of Alabama’s course and/or program requirements, the following process will be followed in the case that a student’s request for an academic accommodation is denied:

1. The student must provide a written appeal to the ODS Director, seeking a formal review of the request. Because the nature of accommodation at the college level is to ensure equal access, the appeal must include the following information:
   - The requested accommodation,
   - The functional limitations of the student’s disability that would be remedied by the requested accommodation,
   - Any other pertinent information that the student would like to share.

2. The assigned Accommodations Specialist will present all pertinent information (i.e., student's documentation of disability, history of academic accommodations, the accommodation request, course information and/or course syllabus) to the ODS Director or designee.

3. The ODS Director or designee will review the request and accompanying documentation with a selection of individuals who are trained, knowledgeable, and experienced in the relevant area. Consideration will be given as to whether the accommodation requested can be offered to this specific student, or if other effective accommodations exist.

4. Following the review process, the student will be informed, in writing, of the decision by the ODS Director or designee. If the accommodation is denied, the reasons for the denial and an offer of alternative accommodations (if available) will be provided.

5. The student will be offered an opportunity to respond and provide additional documentation to support the accommodation request.

6. Notice will be provided to the student of the right to file an appeal with the Associate Provost for Administration (provost@ua.edu).
**Reporting Accommodation Issues**

The following process applies to students who have been approved to receive accommodations, and believe that an instructor or staff member has not provided an approved accommodation.

Step 1: If informal discussions with instructor/staff member have not resolved the issue, the student should contact their assigned Accommodations Specialist. The Accommodations Specialist will attempt to resolve the issue by communicating with the instructor/staff member. Other ODS personnel and/or the ODS Director may be consulted in order to develop a resolution.

Step 2: If Step 1 provides no resolution, the student should submit a written or recorded complaint to the ODS Director or designee as soon as possible following the event(s) that triggered the complaint. The ODS Director or designee shall contact the appropriate UA personnel, which may include the academic department and/or Dean’s Office, in order to attempt to resolve the issue. The appeal must include the following information:

- The requested accommodation,
- Details explaining how the accommodation was not provided,
- Any other pertinent information that the student would like to share.

Step 3. If Step 2 does not resolve the complaint, the ODS Director or their designee will forward the complaint to the Provost or designee within the Office of Academic Affairs.

Step 4. The Provost or designee will gather information and render a final decision that will be communicated to all parties.

**ODS Staff Complaint**

The following process applies when a student wishes to file a complaint against an ODS staff member.

ODS is a part of UA’s Office for Academic Affairs. All complaints related to services and/or experiences with ODS should be reported to the ODS Director. If the complaint is not resolved through this process, students, faculty, and staff may file a complaint with the Associate Provost for Administration:

Associate Provost for Administration  
Office of Academic Affairs  
254 Rose Administration Building  
Box 870114  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0114  
Phone: 205-348-4890  
Fax: 205-348-9137  
Email: provost@ua.edu
**Academic Grievance**

The following process applies to students who wish to grieve a grade or academic decision. This process rests with the academic department, and ODS has no jurisdiction over this process.

If you disagree with an academic decision, grade, or application of course policy that is unrelated to the receipt of accommodations, you may file an Academic Grievance. The Academic Grievance procedures can be found in the UA Faculty Handbook: [http://facultyhandbook.ua.edu/appendix-d.html](http://facultyhandbook.ua.edu/appendix-d.html)

**ADA/Section 504 Complaint**

The following process applies when a student believes they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability.

The University of Alabama is committed to ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students alleging discrimination, or who believe that their request for a non-academic, disability-related accommodation was improperly denied, in whole or in part, may appeal that decision to the UA Compliance Officer/ADA Coordinator:

[https://eop.ua.edu/index.html](https://eop.ua.edu/index.html)

- Office of Equal Opportunity Programs
- 2416 Capital Hall
- Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
- Box 870300
- Phone: (205) 348-5855
- Fax: (205) 348-7153
- TTY: (205) 348-5573

Students also have a right to file a formal complaint with the Regional Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Atlanta Office, 61 Forsythe St. SW, Suite 19T70, Atlanta, GA 30301-3104 (404-562-6350; 1-800-621-3115).
Requesting Copies of Documentation

Occasionally students need to request copies of their documentation, or their letter of accommodation, for accommodation requests on standardized exams, or if the student has graduated and is starting a graduate program. ODS will release documentation to students based on the following policy:

- If an evaluation was performed by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), ODS cannot provide copies of the documentation. The student must contact their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to request documentation.
- ODS will not fax or email documentation to a 3rd party (i.e., a clinician or another university).
- ODS will not fax documentation to anyone, including the student.
- If students intend to pick up their documentation from the ODS office, ODS requires 2 business days to prepare the documentation.
- If students intend for their documentation to be mailed or emailed, ODS requires 5 business days to prepare the documentation.
- For students’ protection, a photo id is required before documentation can be released. If documentation is mailed or emailed, the student must present an electronic copy of their photo id at the time of the request.

Students who need to request copies of documentation may complete the Request for Copies of Documentation form on the ODS website: [http://ods.ua.edu/forms/](http://ods.ua.edu/forms/)
# Campus Resources

## Academic Assistance
- Capstone Center for Student Success
  - [https://success.ua.edu/](https://success.ua.edu/)
- ENGenuity Lab
  - [students.eng.ua.edu/programs/engenuity-lab/](https://students.eng.ua.edu/programs/engenuity-lab/)
- Applied Tutoring
  - [https://www.appliedtutoring.com/](https://www.appliedtutoring.com/)
- UA Writing Center
  - [https://writingcenter.ua.edu](https://writingcenter.ua.edu)
- University Libraries
  - [https://www.lib.ua.edu/](https://www.lib.ua.edu/)

## Health and Mental Health
- Student Health Center and Pharmacy
  - [https://shc.sa.ua.edu/](https://shc.sa.ua.edu/)
- Counseling Center
  - [https://counseling.sa.ua.edu/](https://counseling.sa.ua.edu/)
- Psychology Clinic
  - [https://psychologyclinic.ua.edu/](https://psychologyclinic.ua.edu/)
- Women and Gender Resource Center
  - [https://wgrc.sa.ua.edu/](https://wgrc.sa.ua.edu/)
- Capstone Family Therapy Clinic
  - [http://www.hdfs.ches.ua.edu/the-clinic.html](http://www.hdfs.ches.ua.edu/the-clinic.html)

## Housing, Dining, Parking Accommodations
- Housing & Residential Communities
  - [https://housing.sa.ua.edu/apply/medical-requests/](https://housing.sa.ua.edu/apply/medical-requests/)
- Bama Dining
  - [http://bamadining.ua.edu/food-allergies/](http://bamadining.ua.edu/food-allergies/)
- Parking Services
  - [http://bamaparking.ua.edu/permits/](http://bamaparking.ua.edu/permits/)

## Campus Accessibility
- Accessibility Map
  - [https://www.ua.edu/map/files/map-ADA.pdf](https://www.ua.edu/map/files/map-ADA.pdf)
- ADA Compliance Officer
  - [https://eop.ua.edu/disabilities.html](https://eop.ua.edu/disabilities.html)
- Technology Accessibility
  - [https://accessibility.ua.edu/](https://accessibility.ua.edu/)
Emergency Preparedness

The University of Alabama maintains a comprehensive emergency management program that incorporates a number of plans and procedures. The program is accredited by the Emergency Management Accreditation Agency (EMAP) and is one of three universities in the nation that has earned this accreditation.

The Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) supports the emergency management program. Their website is a resource for students, employees, and visitors to enhance emergency preparedness: https://ready.ua.edu/

Students will receive emergency notifications through the UA Alerts app: https://ready.ua.edu/ua-alerts/

Students are encouraged to download the UA Safety app for information on storm shelter locations, AED locations, UAPD advisories, the National Weather Service information for Tuscaloosa County, and an emergency contact list for instant dialing with one push: https://ready.ua.edu/safety-app/

Students are also encouraged to think through their Personal Emergency Plan, taking into consideration any needs related to their disability: https://ready.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Personal-Emergency-Plan.pdf
Thank You!

Thank you for reviewing the information in this handbook. Please remember to visit our website (www.ods.ua.edu) for additional resources and information. As always, you are welcome to contact the office, or your Accommodations Specialist, with any questions or concerns.