

## **Faculty Guide to Accommodative Services**

The information provided is intended to provide faculty with more in-depth information concerning working with Accommodative Services (AS) and students with disabilities. It is designed to furnish you with information regarding policy on providing accommodations, what constitutes appropriate accommodations, and general guidelines for communication with students with disabilities. AS is also available to faculty and staff for consultations and presentations on disability related topics. For more information about services available to students, please refer to the Accommodative Services Handbook for Students at [www.rhodesstate.edu/AccommodativeServices](http://www.rhodesstate.edu/AccommodativeServices).

### **What is a reasonable accommodation?**

Accommodations are granted on a case-by-case basis and are based on individual need. The accommodation cannot cause a fundamental alteration to a program, compromise academic integrity or cause a hardship or financial burden to the college. A reasonable accommodation simply allows for equal access for students with disabilities. Evaluate students with disabilities as you would any student.

### **What if I have a student that I suspect is in need of accommodations?**

If a student does not present an accommodation letter to you, and you see that the student is struggling in class, you should have a private conversation with that student. *Faculty may **not** ask a student if they have a disability or if they had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in high school*, but you may ask what the student did in previous classrooms that gave them more opportunities for success. Often, a student with disabilities will mention that they received an accommodation or IEP. If this is the case, you should immediately refer that student to Accommodative Services, and we will work out the details with the student. It is important that faculty not talk about Accommodative Services providing accommodations for *success*, since by law, Accommodative Services is simply tasked with providing *equal access*.

### **What happens when I receive an accommodation letter?**

It is the student's duty to notify you they have a need for accommodations. If students choose to use their accommodation(s) in your classroom, they will provide you with an Accommodation Letter. Students are advised to give you the accommodation letter as soon as they receive it from AS. Due to federal privacy laws, AS cannot share the nature of the disability with you, but would be happy to discuss options and classroom strategies that could be beneficial.

Refrain from asking the student the nature of the specific disability. If the student chooses to disclose to you the nature of the disability, please keep this information confidential and not share it with other students or faculty.

Some students choose not to register with Accommodative Services (AS) because they want to have a "typical" college experience. If a student is struggling and approaches you disclosing they have a disability, but has not registered with AS, please refer the student to AS.

### **What happens if a student requests an accommodation but does not provide an Accommodation Letter?**

Rhodes State College does not permit faculty to provide accommodations on their own. If a student requests accommodations, but does not provide an Accommodation Letter, please refer that student directly to Accommodative Services. Please only permit accommodations documented in the Accommodation Letter.

### **Can an Accommodation Letter be modified?**

The initial accommodation determination from Accommodative Services may be modified for any number of reasons. Some common reasons for changing the initial accommodation determination are:

- The faculty member teaching the course determines that providing the accommodation would fundamentally alter an essential element of the course, and, upon consultation with Accommodative Services, comes to an agreement about the new arrangement;
- The student tries the accommodation and it is not effective;
- The student requests a different accommodation, provided it is reasonable and appropriate;
- The student does not accept the initial accommodation determination from Accommodative Services and successfully grieves the issue.

### **If a student obtains an Accommodation Letter after the beginning of classes, do I have to go back to the beginning and retest or reevaluate assignments completed before receipt of the accommodation letter?**

A student is entitled to services and accommodations in the course from the date the student provides the Accommodation Letter to the faculty member until the end of the course. Rhodes State College is not required to provide retroactive accommodations, expunge, or reexamine course work completed before documentation of a disability, even if the student can establish that they had a disability at the time of the course work in question.

### **What laws govern students with disabilities in college?**

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Amended in 2008)
- Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)

These laws require equal access to students in the classroom. Under these laws, you need to:

- Make reasonable accommodations
- Provide equal access to classroom materials
- Maintain confidentiality

These laws do not require you to grade students with accommodations any easier or accept behaviors you would not tolerate from other students.

### **Whom should I contact for additional questions?**

Please contact Accommodative Services at 419-995-8009 for any additional questions. To review a copy of the Accommodative Services Handbook for Students, please visit [www.rhodesstate.edu/Accommodativeservices](http://www.rhodesstate.edu/Accommodativeservices).

*These recommendations are based on guidance from the Association on Higher Education and Disability, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.*