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ADA STUDENT SERVICES HANDBOOK

Division of Student Development Services

2023-2024

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ADA Office Handbook, Effective August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024

351 North Broad Street
 Mobile, AL 36603
 (251) 405-7156

Policy of Nondiscrimination

In accordance with the official policy of the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees, Bishop State Community College is committed to equal opportunity in employment and education. No person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment on the grounds of race, color, disability, sex, religion, creed, national origin, or age. Bishop State Community College complies with non-discrimination regulations under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C., subsections 1681-1686), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (20 U.S.C. subsection 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities; Title IX, Section 106.8, which provides protection against acts of sexual harassment; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and the Campus Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 (Title II of Public Law 101-542). Bishop State Community College also complies with The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1989 (P.L. 100-690).

ADA Student Services Handbook

This handbook is designed to acquaint Bishop State students, faculty, and staff with the guidelines, policies, and procedures of the ADA Office.

Division of Student Development Services

Mission and Goals

The mission of Bishop State Community Division of Student Development is to provide a learning environment which maximizes the opportunity for student growth, both individually and collectively, by establishing provisions for the development of the mind and body; not aside from curriculum instruction, but in partnership with it; not as a supplement but as a complement. The Division of Student Development Services assists all students of the College.

ADA Office

The ADA Office provides reasonable accommodations to students with qualified disabilities. The ADA Office is the only office at Bishop State Community College authorized to review confidential disability documentation and determine eligibility to receive accommodations.

Email: adaoffice@bishop.edu

Ms. Cherry Watkins, ADA Services Specialist, 251-405-7156

- Conducts intake interviews
- Issues instructor accommodation letter
- Arranges alternative testing
- Provides faculty support and training
- Assists with the resolution of disability discrimination complaints

Confidentiality

The ADA Office will maintain the confidentiality of all student records as required by law. Any information collected is used by the ADA Office for the benefit of the student. This information may include disability information, test data, academic records, biographical history, performance reviews, case notes, and correspondence.

No one has immediate access to student files located within the ADA Office except authorized staff. A student has the right to review his/her file. Otherwise, information regarding the student's disability obtained from healthcare professionals will be considered confidential and will be shared with others within the College on a need-to-know basis only, and only with signed consent from the student.

College faculty and staff do not have a right or a need to access diagnostic or other information regarding a student's disability. Faculty and staff will be informed of the functionally inhibitive manifestations of the student's disability and the accommodations necessary or appropriate to mitigate the aforementioned deficiencies. When a student requests an accommodation, she/he will be informed as to what information will be provided to the faculty or staff regarding the request.

A student's file may be released pursuant to a court order or subpoena. In addition, a student may give written authorization for the release of educational information when he or she wishes to share it with others.

Introduction

Bishop State Community College is committed to making its academic programs and services accessible to qualified students with disabilities. Consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended), it is the policy of Bishop State Community College that no qualified person with a disability shall be subjected to discrimination because of that disability under any program or activity conducted or sponsored by the College.

What is a Disability?

As defined by the ADA, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as caring for oneself, talking, seeing, hearing, reading, thinking, learning); a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

The Law

Postsecondary institutions must take necessary steps to ensure that students with disabilities are not excluded from programs and services:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that, *“No otherwise qualified handicapped individual...shall, solely, by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance.”*

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) extended federal civil rights protection by prohibiting public entities such as colleges and universities from excluding individuals with disabilities from programs, services, and activities.

The **ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA)** broadened the definition of an individual with a disability to include those who were unintentionally not covered by the ADA of 1990.

Academic Requirements

Colleges are not required to alter essential academic requirements for any students. Requirements, which can be demonstrated as essential to a course or program of study or to any directly related licensing requirements, are not regarded as discriminatory. **Students with disabilities must meet the same standards of academic performance as all students.**

Differences Between High School and College Disability Services

For students who are recent high school graduates, there are some important differences between high school and college in the provision of reasonable accommodations for a qualified disability.

Colleges are required to:

- Make all programs and services physically accessible to all students
- Provide auxiliary aids and appropriate equipment to ensure the participation of students with disabilities in college classes and activities
- Accommodate the academic participation of qualified students with disabilities in college classes and activities

Colleges are not required to:

- Provide specific auxiliary aids as long as the college provides a method of assistance that allows equal opportunity
- Provide academic modifications if these modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program or place undue burden on the institution
- Lower admission criteria for applicants with disabilities
- Diagnose a disability or conduct testing and assessment of learning difficulties, physical, or mental impairments
- Provide personal attendants
- Provide personal or private tutors

Differences in Policies and Procedures

High School

- It is the school's responsibility to identify students with disabilities.
- The school must provide disability assessment and classification.
- The school's staff will discuss academic progress with parents or legal guardians.
- The school must develop an Individualized Educational Program for the student.
- The school must coordinate the provision of all services, monitor progress, and evaluate results.

College

- It is the student's responsibility to self-identify or disclose his/her disability.
- The student must provide documentation of his/her disability to the appropriate office.
- The student is considered an adult with privacy protections. College staff cannot talk with parents or legal guardians about the student's academic progress.

- The student must request specific accommodations and provide supporting evidence through documentation.
- The college must provide reasonable accommodations for students who qualify.

Differences in Courses

High School

- Class attendance is mandatory and carefully monitored.
- Teachers will usually approach students who are having academic difficulties.
- Teachers remind students of assignment due dates.
- Teachers will provide students with missed information when they are absent.

College

- The student is expected to follow the instructor's attendance policy as outlined in the course syllabus.
- The student must provide documentation of his/her disability to the appropriate office.
- The student is responsible to ask the instructor for help.
- The student must approach his/her instructor for information missed when absent.

Differences in Accommodations

High School

- Services include individually designed instruction, modifications, and accommodations based on an IEP.
- Modifications that change course outcomes may be offered based on the IEP.
- Appropriate accommodations are determined by the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

College

- Reasonable accommodations may be made to provide equal access and participation in courses, activities, and services.
- The college is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential course requirements.
- Appropriate accommodations must be determined based on the student's disability documentation, and individual need.

Documentation Guidelines

Students seeking disability accommodations are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility for services. Disability documentation must:

- Clearly state the diagnosed disability or disabilities.
- Describe the functional limitations resulting from the disability or disabilities.
- Be current, e.g., completed within the last 3 years (Note: Does not apply to physical or sensory disabilities of a permanent or unchanging nature).
- Include complete educational, developmental, and medical history relevant to the disability for which accommodations are being requested.
- Include a list of test instruments used in the evaluation report and relevant subtest scores used to document the stated disability (Note: Does not apply to physical or sensory disabilities of a permanent or unchanging nature).
- Be typed on official letterhead and be signed by an evaluator qualified to make the diagnosis (include information about license or certification and area of specialization).

Procedures for Obtaining Accommodations

The ADA Office supports students enrolled in credit and non-credit programs offered by Bishop State Community College.

Step One: Registration (Self-Identification)

Students requesting accommodations must self-identify by completing an application and submitting the appropriate documentation (see Documentation Guidelines) to the ADA Office.

Registration information can be found on the College's website:

<https://www.bishop.edu/student-services/ada-accommodations>.

Step Two: Accommodation Determination

To determine reasonable accommodations, the ADA Office will review the submitted documentation and contact the student to take part in an Intake interview. The intake interview is an opportunity for the ADA staff and student to discuss accommodations and address any disability-related concerns. Intake interviews may take place in-person or via web conferencing platform.

The time to arrange accommodations may vary. While students may register their need for accommodations at any point in the semester, some accommodation may take longer to arrange than others.

Note: Academic accommodations are not retroactive.

Step Three: Notification

Faculty are notified via email of the qualified student's accommodation plan in an *Instructor Letter*. An instructor is not obligated to provide accommodations to a student with a disability prior to receiving an Instructor Letter. The letter clearly details the student's approved accommodations. If there is a change in instructors or modifications are needed, students must notify the ADA Office immediately.

Note: Students must submit a new course schedule each semester to receive *Instructor Notification* letter.

Step Four: Grievances

Any disability-related or accommodation complaints including disability discrimination should be addressed to the Associate Dean of Instruction/ADA Coordinator at aagnew@bishop.edu.

Students may file a formal complaint with the Office for Civil Rights. The Office for Civil Rights investigates complaints alleging violations of the ADA and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html>

Procedures for the Continuation of Accommodations

A student should register with the ADA Office to establish accommodations. Thereafter, students must contact the ADA Office each semester to verify continuation of services. Each semester, a class schedule and a *Semester Request Form* must be completed and submitted prior to the issuance of the *Instructor Notification* letter.

Accommodations

Accommodations are approved and administered on a case-by-case basis. (The listing below is not intended to be an exhaustive description, but to give students a sampling of some common accommodations.) Note: Postsecondary institutions are not required to provide services of a personal nature such as tutoring, transportation, or attendant care.

General Classroom Accommodations

- Assistance with course selection
- Preferential seating
- Interpretive services
- Note-taking assistance
- Enlarged materials
- Adaptive equipment
- Alternative format textbooks
- Specialized furniture

Testing Accommodations

Proctored testing in the ADA Office is offered to faculty as a courtesy. It is the responsibility of the student to discuss scheduling and details of the requested accommodations with each instructor. For testing at the ADA Office, students must complete a test accommodations request form 48 business hours prior to each examination. Note: Requests for final exams must be received one week prior to exam. Common testing accommodations:

- Extended time (generally time-and-one-half and double-time)
- Reader services
- Scribe services
- Adaptive equipment
- Modification of test response format
- Distraction-reduced environment

Bishop State Community College requires all prospective students to take the Accuplacer examination before beginning classes as a freshman. This instrument is used for Math and English course placement. If ADA accommodations are needed for placement testing, contact the ADA Office prior to taking the Accuplacer.

Special Parking

Handicapped parking is clearly marked and available campus-wide.

Service Animals

A service animal is 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. Miniature horses may be considered service animals in some cases. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the functional limitations of an individual's disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals.

Rights and Responsibilities

This section outlines the rights and responsibilities for students, faculty, and Bishop State Community College.

Students

Students have a right to:

- Request reasonable accommodations from the ADA Office.
- Discuss approved accommodations with the ADA Office staff and seek modifications or clarification as necessary.
- Receive approved accommodations in a timely manner.
- Trust that all disability related information will be maintained in a confidential manner.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Follow ADA Office policies and procedures to obtain accommodations.
- Submit disability documentation that meets College guidelines.
- Meet essential academic standards of courses/programs.
- Notify the ADA Office if there are issues in receiving accommodations.
- Notify the ADA Office when your schedule changes or you have new course enrollments.

Faculty

Faculty have a right to:

- Trust that the ADA Office has vetted all student requests for disability-related accommodations.
- Expect students to meet all academic standards of courses and programs.
- Ensure confidentiality. (Faculty do not have a right to ask students to disclose the nature of a disability nor should faculty request to see a student's disability documentation.)

Faculty have a responsibility to:

- Administer approved accommodations as described in the ADA Office's *Instructor Letter* without requiring reminders from the student prior to providing accommodations.
- Maintain confidentiality in communicating about accommodations in a classroom setting.
- Ensure that all course materials are accessible.

Bishop State Community College

Bishop State Community College has a right to:

- Request documentation that meets established guidelines.
- Expect students and faculty to work in collaboration with the ADA Office to facilitate accommodation requests and implementation.
- Deny unreasonable requests that would fundamentally alter the nature of a course, program, or activity of the College.
- Communicate student disability-related information on a need-to-know basis.

Bishop State Community College has a responsibility to:

- Effectively establish and communicate essential course and program requirements.
- Provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities registered with the ADA Office.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all student disability-related information.

Resources

Learning Assistance Center

Programs and services offered at the Learning Assistance Center (LAC) are designed to enhance learning skills and help students succeed. Academic success services are available to all Bishop State students through the LAC. The LAC is located in the Delchamps Student Life Center and is open Monday-Thursday from 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. and on Fridays from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. For more information, please contact the Learning Assistance Center, at lac@bishop.edu or call (251) 405-7009.

Online Tutoring

The College provides free, confidential, and convenient academic support to students in an online environment. Tutoring is provided either with Bishop State personnel or an Upswing coach. For more information: <https://bishop.upswing.io/>

Counseling Services

Professional counselors are available to assist you with personal and social issues that might impact your college success and personal well-being. Appointments can be scheduled via Zoom. Use your campus email when emailing for counseling assistance. This is required due to federal regulations that protect your privacy. Contact information:

Dr. Victoria Perry, Main Campus
Email: vperry@bishop.edu
Contact: (251) 405-7088

Academic Advising Center

The Academic Advising Center is located in the Delchamps Student Life Center and is available to offer students advice and guidance for their educational success. Some of the services offered include:

- Academic Advising
- Schedule Planning
- Degree Evaluation
- Graduation Tracking
- Career Goals Assistance
- One-on-One Development
- Campus Engagement
- Awareness of Scholarship Opportunities

Library Resources

Bishop State offers a wide range of library services to its students, faculty, staff, and, on some campuses, the public. The available libraries are to provide services and resources to enable learning through inquiry, discovery, and exchange of information.

Contact Information & Hours:

Main Campus Library: (251) 405-7113

Monday – Thursday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Friday, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Carver Campus Library: (251) 662-5390

Monday – Thursday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Friday, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Southwest Campus Library: (251) 665-4091

Monday – Thursday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Friday, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.