

The purpose of the accommodation process is to ensure equal access to programs and services for students with disabilities at West Georgia Technical College. Accessibility Services meet with students to gather information about their academic experiences and how the accommodations they are requesting are necessary for removing barriers to programs or services. We attempt to meet with students within seven days of their inquiry about services. However, it may require several meetings to determine reasonable and equitable accommodations. Reviewing the information in this guidebook can help students better understand the accommodation process and help them understand their rights as a student with a disability.

**To make informed decisions about accommodations, we rely on the following information:**

- ❖ Student report/history and third-party documentation from a qualified licensed professional such as a medical doctor, counselor or other health professional
- ❖ Previous educational reports such as an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and or 504 Plan
- ❖ Information from other campus community members

**Third- party documentation is requested for two primary reasons:**

- ❖ To establish that a student has a disability
- ❖ To provide information that will assist our office in understanding how and why an accommodation is reasonable and necessary for ensuring nondiscrimination and equality of access relative to a disability

**Documentation**

- ❖ Refer to the Criteria for Documentation form which is obtained by an Accessibility Services staff member or online on the Accessibility Services web page of the college's website at <https://www.westgatech.edu/contact-us/accessibility-services/>.
- ❖ Documentation should be provided by a licensed professional and submitted on professional letterhead to include the professional address, telephone number, signature and licensed number.
- ❖ Documentation should include the student's diagnosis and an explanation of how the disability impacts their daily activities specifically in the academic environment.
- ❖ Documentation should detail how the academic environment can eliminate barriers in the academic environment such as in note-taking, test-taking, group participation, reading, writing, etc.

- ❖ While third-party documentation may be sufficient to establish the presence of a disability, documentation alone does not determine whether accommodations are reasonable. West Georgia Technical College has the right to determine if an accommodation is reasonable or not.

### **Accommodations are not approved if they:**

- ❖ Alter the nature of the program or course
- ❖ Lower the academic standard (e.g. if the accommodation may give the student an unfair advantage over the other students). Students with disabilities are expected to meet the same academic standards as their peers.
- ❖ Pose a health or safety risk to the student with a disability or others at the college.
- ❖ Can be managed with the assistance from other academic resources such as academic coaching or tutoring services.

### **Accommodations/Academic Adjustment**

- ❖ Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), colleges must provide – at no cost to the student — “reasonable accommodations” to make their programs accessible to students with disabilities. Section 504 and the ADA use the term “auxiliary aids and services” to refer to devices and services that make programs and materials available to people with disabilities.
- ❖ Most accommodations are determined according to the student’s submitted documentation.
- ❖ Students may have been allowed an accommodation in secondary school, but the accommodation may be deemed not reasonable in college.
- ❖ A documented or recommended accommodation can be disapproved if the college deems it as unreasonable.
- ❖ The college has the right to request additional documentation if an accommodation is requested which may appear unreasonable for the student's disability and is not warranted based on the documentation presented.

- ❖ All returning students are allowed to register on the first day of registration each semester. Thus, Early Registration is not normally an accommodation granted.
- ❖ It is recommended that students request accommodations at the beginning of the semester as accommodations are not retroactive.

## Assistive Devices/Aids

- ❖ Accessibility Services has assistive technology available for students to use if needed. However, a student will be responsible for replacing the device if lost, damaged, or stolen while in the student's possession.
- ❖ All borrowed equipment, devices and/or textbooks should be returned in the condition in which it was received by the due date, usually the last day of the semester borrowed, to avoid a "HOLD" being placed on their record.
- ❖ WGTC has the right to request additional documentation when an assistive device or service is requested by student.

## Types of Assistive Technology

- Laptops
  - Reading Pens
  - Textbooks
  - Recorders
  - Live Scribe Pens – note recording pens
  - Magnifier
  - Digital textbooks
  - Screen readers

## Confidentiality

- ❖ An electronic file is maintained on each student registered with the office and the student's actual disability is private and confidential.
- ❖ A student can request a copy of their file at any time by completing a Release of Information Form and returning it to the Accessibility Services office with a copy of their photo ID.
- ❖ Instructors will only receive a Student Accommodation Letter (SAL), and will not know the student's actual disability, unless the student shares it.

## **Discipline-** “Disability never excuses misconduct.”

- ❖ **All** Students enrolled at WGTC must adhere to the policies and procedures which are outlined in the Student Catalog. The Student

Catalog is located at

<https://westgatech.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2023-2024/student-catalog/>.

## **Disclosure of Disability**

- ❖ West Georgia Technical College and all staff are prohibited from asking a **prospective** student if a disability exist.
- ❖ Students, not parents, are responsible for initiating and presenting the appropriate documentation for services.
- ❖ Students have the right to decline assistance, even if their parent(s) or others insist on them receiving services.
- ❖ Prospective students desiring accommodations on the admissions placement exam, must disclose prior to taking the exam.
- ❖ Individuals who are accepted to the college will have the opportunity to disclose their disability during the orientation by completing the New Student Orientation Survey. Students are contacted either by phone and/or email about services after the New Student Orientation.
- ❖ Students can disclose a disability and request accommodations any time during their studies here at West Georgia Technical College.
- ❖ Students should only submit documentation verifying disability to the Accessibility Services office and are discouraged from sharing what their disability is with others at the college.

## Eligibility Determination

- ❖ Eligibility for services/accommodations is determined by an initial interview with the student to discuss eligibility. Documentation is requested to assist in the determination process. It is not the responsibility of the Accessibility Services office to contact a qualified professional on the behalf of the student to arrange accommodations. Additionally, it is not the responsibility of the office to write recommended accommodations for the students.
- ❖ An IEP and or 504 Plan, are plans used in K-12 to outline the approved modifications/accommodations made for students with documented disabilities. An IEP or 504 Plan does not solely constitute eligibility for accommodations in college. It is suggested that students submit the medical report or psychological evaluation used by their K-12 institution for developing the IEP or 504 Plan.
- ❖ An IEP or 504 Plan can be used for services such as the ACCUPLACER entrance exam; and, in some cases a semester of classroom accommodations. The Criteria for Documentation will apply.
- ❖ If approved for services, no services will be rendered until all necessary intake documentation is signed and submitted by the student.
- ❖ Classroom accommodations are specific to a course and not a semester.
- ❖ WGTC is not responsible for arranging or paying for testing for the determination of a disability.

## Grievance Procedure

- ❖ Students are responsible for discussing matters relating to their accommodations with the instructor and Accessibility Services Coordinator. If not satisfied with the outcome, they should follow the below steps in sequence:
  1. Discuss the matter with the Accessibility Services Coordinator
  2. Still not satisfied, contact Zelma Jones in writing at [zelma.jones@westgatech.edu](mailto:zelma.jones@westgatech.edu)

## Interpretive Services

- ❖ WGTC must provide interpretive services, and has the right to determine the type of services as long as it is an effective form of communication. This includes: sign language interpretive services, C-Print, or CART services, at no cost to the student. ***Sign Language interpretive services are delivered via remote interpreting.***
- ❖ WGTC has the discretion to determine which assistive device or aid is implemented, including those needed for interpretive services. However, the college must ensure that the aids are effective
- ❖ Students receiving these services will sign the policy and procedures for the services during the intake interview process.

## Personal Assistants

- ❖ West Georgia Technical College is not responsible for providing personal assistants or mentors. However, they are allowed if determined as a reasonable accommodation.
- ❖ Students are responsible for providing personal assistants - individuals who aid with the student's hygiene, eating, and other personal needs.
- ❖ Students are responsible for providing mentors, if desired – individuals who attend classes with the student to monitor the student's behavior. The mentor is not responsible for any instructional assistance, such as note-taking, proctoring exams, or reading course materials.

## Service Animals

- ❖ Service animals are usually dogs trained by a certified professional to perform a task for individuals with a disability. Service animals are allowed in the classroom and other areas of the college but must be under the control of the handler at all times.

## Emotional Animals

- ❖ WGTC is not legally mandated to allow emotional animals on campus because the college doesn't offer campus housing.

## Accessibility Services Student Records/Consent

- ❖ This section only pertains to the Accessibility Services
- ❖ Adherence to [FERPA](#) requires that students are allowed to view their records upon request.
- ❖ Student can request a copy of their documentation by completing the Release of Information Form and emailing it to [accessibilityservices@westgatech.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@westgatech.edu). A copy of the student's photo ID (i.e. drivers licenses or student ID) must be attached for processing.
- ❖ Student's information is not released to a third party, including parents, or university/college unless a written consent of release is provided by the student.
- ❖ Upon consent, information is only released, *if* requested by the third party. The Accessibility Services staff is not required to contact the third party, even if a matter arises concerning a student, except in the case of an emergency. Parents should not expect college staff to initiate calling, emailing, or writing to report on the student's progress or attendance.
- ❖ Consent provided to the Accessibility Services program does not automatically constitute consent to other departments of the college.
- ❖ Student's Accessibility Services records are destroyed 5 years after the student exits the college.
- ❖ Students must advocate for themselves, not parents, teachers, spouses, or guardian.
- ❖ The college also adheres to the HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act 1996 laws

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**Adamson Square**  
401 Adamson Square  
Carrollton, GA 30117  
678.664.0400

**Carroll Campus**  
500 Technology Pkwy  
Carrollton, GA 30116  
770.836.6800

**Coweta Campus**  
200 Campus Dr.  
Newnan, GA 30263  
770.755.7800

**Douglas Campus**  
4600 Timber Ridge Dr.  
Douglasville, GA 30135  
770.947.7200

**LaGrange Campus**  
1 College Circle  
LaGrange, GA 30240  
706.845.4323

**Murphy Campus**  
176 Murphy Campus Blvd.  
Waco, GA 30182  
770.537.6000

any instructional assistance, such as note-taking, proctoring exams, or reading.

### Students' Responsibility

- ❖ Students have the responsibility of submitting complete and accurate information pertaining to their disability.
- ❖ Students have the responsibility of providing Accessibility Services a copy of their Student Detail Schedule, located in BannerWeb, each semester in order for their Student Accommodation Letter to be emailed to instructors. If not, student will not receive classroom accommodations for that semester.
- ❖ Students have the responsibility of notifying Accessibility Services of any problems receiving approved accommodations. Accommodations are not retroactive. Therefore, it is important that you notify the Accessibility Services immediately about any concerns regarding accommodations.
- ❖ Students have the responsibility of learning, understanding and following the requirements of their accommodations. They also have the responsibility of asking questions if they do not understand or agree with their accommodations.
- ❖ Students have the responsibility of seeking tutoring services when needed and contacting Accessibility Services if assistance is needed.
- ❖ Discuss matters of concern relating to my accommodations with the instructor, and if not satisfied with the outcome, I will contact the accessibility services staff
- ❖ Take responsibility for the consequences of not following the requirements of your accommodations and the terms of this Guidebook
- ❖ Interact with the Accessibility Services staff in a respectable manner



## Students' Rights

- ❖ Students have the right to access their records and request copies at any time. Please see Student Records/Consent for more information.
- ❖ Students have the right to privacy and confidentiality at all times. The accessibility services staff will inform you when and if private information about your disability is shared with individuals outside of the college.
- ❖ Student have the right to share with others at the college information about their disability. However, we encourage you to avoid sharing to prevent misconceptions and misunderstandings of some individuals.
- ❖ Student have the right to **decline** services at any time.

## Signature Page

*Your signature confirms that an Accessibility Services staff has discussed the guidelines in the Accessibility Services Guidebook with you. No classroom accommodations will be rendered until all intake required documentation is signed and submitted by student.*

Accessibility Services staff is concerned about the academic progress of students. If you agree to communicate with Accessibility Services staff about your academic progress, please initial\_\_\_\_\_.

Academic Coaching is available free to students who desire to enhance their academic performance.

Student ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Updated May 2024