

RPCC HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Policies, Procedures, and Resources



**Office of Counseling Services
River Parishes Community College**

RPCC
RIVER
PARISHES
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
www.rpcc.edu
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MISSION

College

River Parishes Community College is an open-admission, two-year, post-secondary public institution serving the river parishes. The College provides transferable courses and curricula up to and including Certificates and Associates degrees. River Parishes Community College also partners with the communities it serves by providing programs for personal, professional, and academic growth.

River Parishes Community College fulfills its mission by:

1. **Student Access, Success, and Retention**—Providing students with appropriate education, training, and student services at moderate costs, convenient times, and accessible locations to increase their success in obtaining an Associates degree at RPCC, transferring to baccalaureate studies, or entering the workforce.
2. **Educational Programs and Services**—Developing responsive, innovative education and training programs that prepare students for immediate employment or transfer to two- and four-year colleges or universities.
3. **Instruction**—Creating interactions among students, faculty, and staff that stimulate learning.
4. **Student Development and Learning**—Offering student services programs to motivate students to maximize their potential for learning through goal attainment, healthy competitiveness, and the development of teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, problem solving, information literacy, and citizenship skills.
5. **Cultural, Economic, and Educational Diversity**—Creating a campus environment that encourages quality learning experiences and that reinforces the value of cultural and economic diversity and mutual respect.
6. **Partnerships**—Strengthening mutually beneficial partnerships with secondary education and universities, business and industry, government agencies, economic development entities, and community-based organizations that expand educational opportunities for current and future students.
7. **Technology and Electronic Learning**—Making effective use of new and emerging technology to improve teaching and learning in RPCC's classrooms, laboratories, and other learning environments.
8. **College Personnel**—Recruiting and retaining exemplary faculty, staff, and administrators through continuous professional development.
9. **Fiscal/Physical Resources**—Effectively developing and managing the resources allocated for capital and operational expenses to support the mission of the College.

Disability Support Services (Office of Counseling Services)

The Office of Counseling Services (OCS) is dedicated to service excellence in the provision of comprehensive and flexible accommodation plans that contribute to the successful academic endeavors of qualified students who have disabilities. OCS works with RPCC faculty and staff to further the understanding of the needs of the students being served.

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES

A person is eligible for services if he/she:

- is otherwise qualified for the program(s),
- is a person with a disability,
- has identified himself/herself to the Office of Counseling Services by completing an Application for Accommodations, and
- has presented appropriate documentation regarding the disability as required by the Office of Counseling Services (see section entitled "Documentation Guidelines") and requires accommodations.

Note: Accommodations are effective after the documentation has been reviewed and approved by OCS. Accommodations are not retroactive. Also, documentation required by OCS may not be sufficient at other universities or testing agencies.

DISABILITY LAWS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

A student with a disability is entitled by law to equal access to College programs. Two federal laws protect persons with disabilities in postsecondary education: the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. No. 93-112, as amended) and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (Pub. L. No. 101-336).

The Rehabilitation Act

Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is generally regarded as the first civil rights legislation on the national level for people with disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a program access statute. This statute prohibits the discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity offered by an entity or institution receiving federal funds.

Section 504 states:

No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States...shall, solely on the basis of disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal financial assistance.

Under Section 504, institutions were required to appoint and maintain at least one person to coordinate its efforts to comply with the requirements of Section 504 (Section 504 Coordinator). This individual of office has the ongoing responsibility of assuring that the institution/agency/organization practices nondiscrimination on the basis of disability and

should be included in any grievance procedures developed to address possible instances of discrimination brought against the institution. At RPCC, the established office for the coordination of Section 504 compliance for students with disabilities is the Office of Counseling Services, located in Building C. This office may be reached at (225) 675-8270.

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA)

The ADA is a federal civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. There are four sections of the law: employment, government, public accommodations, and telecommunications. The ADA provides additional protection for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA is designed to remove barriers, which prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities that are available to persons without disabilities.

Postsecondary institutions are covered in many ways under the ADA. Employment is addressed by Title I, accessibility provided by public and Title II and III address private entities, and miscellaneous items are addressed under Title V and Title IV.

The ADA in Relation to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Institutions that receive federal funds (such as RPCC) are covered under Section 504. The ADA does not supplant Section 504, but those situations where the ADA provides greater protection the ADA standards apply. Therefore, postsecondary institutions must adhere to both the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act.

Disability Definition

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a person with a disability as a one who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- has a record of the disability, or
- is regarded as having the disability.

Related Definitions:

A **major life activity** is defined as any function including but not limited to caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

A **physical impairment** is defined as any psychological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfiguration, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: cardiovascular, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, musculoskeletal, neurological, respiratory (including speech organs), reproductive, skin and endocrine, and special sense organs.

A **mental impairment** is defined as any psychological disorder, such as organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, or a specific learning disability.

ADMITTANCE TO THE COLLEGE

Qualified persons with disabilities must meet the College's regular admissions standards. However, admission eligibility will be considered on a case-by-case basis to afford applicants an equal educational opportunity. Qualified applicants with disabilities will not be denied admission solely on the basis of their disability. It is not necessary, nor recommended, that students disclose their disability in the application process.

Once admitted to the College, students with disabilities requiring accommodation(s) must contact the Office of Counseling Services to register for services.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Disability-related documentation is defined as any documentation provided to substantiate the student's disability status and need for accommodations (e.g., psychological, psychoeducational, neuropsychological, or medical evaluations; letters; or other information from physicians or medical records). Disability-related information is treated as medical documentation, which is kept confidential, and is not released to anyone outside the accommodation process or direct chain of command with the following exceptions:

- when the student gives OCS a signed release (see appendix) to share disability-related information with the person(s) named on the release;
- when OCS is required and/or permitted by the law and/or a court order to release information;
- when the student is a direct threat to him-/herself or others; and/or
- when the student makes a disability-related allegation, claim, grievance, appeal, or disclosure to the College's attorneys for legal advice to or representation of the College.

Note: Students with disabilities have a right to review their files. This can be arranged by scheduling an appointment with an OCS staff member. **OCS does not provide copies of documentation. This information should be obtained from the originator of the documentation.** OCS will retain a copy of all information within a student's file for five (5) years. Once the student is considered inactive for five years, the file may be destroyed. When a student with a disability requests accommodations, he/she should understand that some disability-related information may be provided on a need-to-know basis to College personnel in order to ensure that the student will receive appropriate accommodations. In most instances, College personnel need to know only what accommodations must be provided to a student and that the student has been through the disability documentation review process in OCS. Otherwise, College personnel do not have access to information regarding a student's disability.

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

Otherwise qualified students with disabilities at RPCC have the RIGHT to:

- equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities available through the College;
- reasonable and appropriate accommodations;
- information available in a timely manner and in an accessible format; and
- confidential treatment of all disability-related information by all RPCC employees

Students with disabilities at RPCC have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- meet the College's qualifications and essential technical, academic, and institutional standards;
- provide documentation from the appropriate professional source(s) that verifies the nature of the disability, functional limitations, and the need for specific accommodations;
- request specific accommodations in a timely manner following OCS procedures with instructors and OCS;
- make an appointment with instructors to facilitate privacy when requesting and discussing accommodations;
- provide instructor(s) each semester with the accommodation letters from OCS in a timely manner;
- communicate needs and concerns with an OCS staff member and instructor, as appropriate;
- act as self-advocate;
- maintain the same responsibility for their education as nondisabled students including maintaining the same academic standards, attending class (exception: when consideration for absences is an approved accommodation), maintaining appropriate behavior, and providing timely notification of individual needs;
- comprehend the course material and communicate that comprehension to faculty member;
- pay any costs associated with providing documentation necessary to receive accommodations; and
- have open communication with instructors regarding any accommodation(s). Note: The communication between the student and instructor should not be limited to e-mail unless agreed upon by both the student and instructor. If a student sends an e-mail or leaves a telephone message for an instructor and receives no response from the instructor, open communication has not taken place.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Faculty and Staff

The faculty and staff have the RIGHT to:

- receive verification of a documented disability from OCS in the form of an accommodation letter delivered by the student;
- expect that the student will initiate specific accommodation requests in a timely manner; and
- consult with OCS in providing appropriate accommodations.

The faculty and staff have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- maintain the student's confidentiality;
- meet privately with students in an accessible location to discuss disability-related needs;
- provide appropriate academic accommodations (approved by OCS) in a timely manner, either independently or in collaboration with OCS;

- provide all class printed materials in alternate format when necessary;
- ensure all audio-visual materials printed in class are accessible;
- communicate procedures clearly with student and OCS;
- offer accessible times and locations for meeting with the student;
- provide reasonable accommodations as determined by the College and not question the student regarding the validity of the documented disability when accommodations are approved by OCS;
- not request to examine the student's confidential documentation;
- maintain the same standards for students with disabilities as are applied to all other students, with the exception of accommodations determined by OCS; and
- contact OCS when an accommodation might violate an essential component of the course, program, or activity.

Rights and Responsibilities of OCS

OCS has the RIGHT to:

- identify and establish appropriate accommodations for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities;
- request and receive appropriate documentation that supports the claim of disability and/or need for the requested accommodations or academic adjustments;
- deny a request for accommodations and academic adjustments if the documentation does not definitively demonstrate that the request is warranted, or if the individual fails to provide appropriate documentation;
- expect that students will initiate specific accommodation requests in a timely manner;
- deny an accommodation that violates an essential component of the course, program, or activity; and
- establish policies and procedures related to providing services to students with disabilities.

OCS has the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- maintain students' confidentiality and the confidentiality of the documentation;
- meet with students privately in an accessible location to discuss disability-related needs;
- provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations in a timely manner, in collaboration with faculty members;
- communicate procedures clearly with students and faculty members; and
- provide reasonable access to OCS staff, accommodations, or available equipment.

DISABILITY PARKING

River Parishes Community College provides handicapped parking spaces reserved for students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities. To park in one of these spaces, you must display a hangtag issued by the Louisiana Department of Motor Vehicles. The hangtag must be hanging from the rearview mirror and be clearly readable through the vehicle window. If you park in a space without the official state hangtag showing, you can be cited with a parking ticket.

If you do not have a state hangtag but need to park in a handicapped parking space because of a temporary disability, you may contact the Office of Student Services to see if

you qualify for an RPCC handicapped parking tag. Persons with an official state hangtag do not need an RPCC handicapped parking permit to park in handicapped parking spaces.

If you have the required hangtag or parking permit and there are no handicapped spaces available, you may park in any other legal parking space.

APPLYING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AT RPCC

Students with disabilities that affect academic functioning may apply for accommodations by completing an Application for Accommodations form (see appendix) and by providing supporting documentation. Specifically, students seeking accommodations should complete each of the following steps:

- A. Read, complete, and sign the Application for Accommodations form. Please note that incomplete forms will not be processed.
- B. Arrange for an evaluation or include a copy of the complete evaluation report with your application for accommodations. Be sure to review the documentation guidelines that follow to ensure that the documentation provided meets these requirements.
- C. Mail all documentation/evaluation materials along with a completed application to:

Director of Counseling Services
River Parishes Community College
P.O. Box 310
7384 John LeBlanc Blvd.
Sorrento, LA 70778

The Office of Counseling Services makes final determination of eligibility and reasonable accommodations by reviewing the documentation, the student's application, and meeting with the student when needed. A prior history of accommodations does not automatically qualify the student for accommodations or services. In addition, receiving services and accommodations at another college or university does not necessarily qualify a student for the same services and accommodations at RPCC. There must be a demonstrated, current need specific to our academic environment that is supported by complete documentation.

You will be notified by mail and/or phone of the approved accommodations and are encouraged to meet with the Director of Counseling Services to review the accommodations. If you have any questions or concerns about the accommodations at the time they are approved or at a later date, schedule an appointment with the Director of Counseling Services to discuss these concerns. Requests for additional accommodations or for modifications of existing accommodations must be approved by the Director of Counseling Services.

Students who are denied accommodations due to a lack of sufficient documentation of their disabilities may resubmit their requests when they have additional documentation. Those who have scheduled assessments or medical examinations in order to obtain more relevant documentation may request temporary approval of accommodations pending the timely receipt of assessment information by the Office of Counseling Services.

Unless otherwise noted, accommodations approved by the Office of Counseling Services will be continuous for the student as long as the student is continuously enrolled at River

Parishes Community College. Students who have a break in enrollment for one or more regular semesters should read the section "Reactivation of Accommodations" for instructions.

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

Students requesting reasonable accommodations are responsible for providing documentation of their disabilities to the Office of Counseling Services. Documentation should be current, demonstrate the existence of a disability, support the reasonable accommodations requested by the student, and have been conducted by a qualified examiner. Additionally, students are responsible for all costs associated with obtaining reports, examinations, testing, etc. If needed to sufficiently document one or more disabilities, a student may submit documents from more than one source. If the documentation is insufficient and more is needed, the Office of Counseling Services will notify the student. The student is then responsible for obtaining additional information or testing as needed.

Below are documentation guidelines that are to be followed regardless of the specific disability. Students should also read and follow the relevant disability-specific section(s). These disability-specific documentation guidelines can be found on the pages that follow.

Documentation Guidelines For All Disabilities

1. Documentation must be typed on professional letterhead and include the name, title, professional credentials of the evaluator (including license or certification and area(s) of specialization), place of employment, state in which the individual practices, and the evaluator's signature.
2. Evaluations must be performed by a professional who is licensed or certified to evaluate and diagnose the particular disability.
3. The professional conducting the assessment must be impartial and cannot be a family member.
4. **An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan is NOT sufficient documentation to determine eligibility. Any IEP that is submitted will be returned to the student.**
5. Because accommodations are not retroactive, students requesting accommodations for the first time should submit their applications and documentation in a timely fashion so that the College has ample time to review these materials, determine eligibility, and make necessary arrangements. If requesting accommodations that take time to arrange (e.g., hiring communication facilitators, purchasing books on tape, etc.), *at least* six weeks' notice should be given. For accommodations that are easier to arrange (e.g., extended time on tests, tests in a distraction-reduced environment), it is sufficient to submit these materials two weeks prior to the start of the semester. These minimum timeframes assume that the documentation submitted is current and comprehensive and meets all of the guidelines outlined in this handbook.

Please note that a brief statement listing only the diagnosis is not sufficient since a condition is not necessarily a disability. Documentation must clearly indicate that the condition results in substantial limitations in major life activities applicable to our academic environment.

Documentation Guidelines for Physical Disabilities and Systemic Illnesses

Students with disabilities that are clearly visible by outward manifestations of the disability shall be afforded accommodations that are clearly justified by the nature of their disability (e.g., a reader for a student who is blind). The College reserves the right to require documentation when a requested accommodation cannot be easily justified and determined by the outward effects of the student's disabling condition. The guidelines below should be followed when providing documentation for disabilities that are not clearly visible.

Evaluator Qualifications

Physical disabilities and systemic illnesses are considered to be in the medical domain and require the expertise of a physician or other medical specialist with experience and expertise in the area for which accommodations are being requested.

Current Documentation

Documentation must be no more than **three years** old for conditions that may change over time or respond to medication. A student with a condition that does not change over time is still encouraged to provide current documentation of the condition because the provision of reasonable accommodations and services is based upon assessment of the current impact of the student's disabilities on his/her academic functioning. In this case, though, re-testing may not be medically necessary to evaluate the student's disability.

Comprehensive Documentation

For the documentation to be comprehensive, it must:

1. identify an unequivocal diagnosis of a specific disability;
2. describe the expected progression or stability of the disability over time;
3. list current medication, dosages, and existing (not possible) side effects;
4. discuss functional limitations caused by the disability in an academic environment or the environment in which the student is requesting accommodations; and
5. include recommended accommodations explaining the need for each as it relates to the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities.

Documentation Guidelines for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Evaluator Qualifications

Physicians, including otorhinolaryngologists (ear, nose, and throat specialists) and otologists (the branch of medicine that deals with the structure, function, and pathology of the ear), are qualified to provide diagnosis and treatment of hearing disorders. Audiologists may also provide current audiograms.

Current Documentation

The age of acceptable documentation is dependent on the condition, the current status of the student, and the student's request for accommodations.

Comprehensive Documentation

For the documentation to be comprehensive, it must:

1. provide a clear statement of deafness or hearing loss and include an audiogram that reflects the current impact that the deafness or hearing loss has on the student's functioning;
2. include a summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and a narrative summary of the evaluation results, if appropriate;
3. describe the assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use, including the possible effectiveness of these devices or services in an educational setting;
4. describe the expected progression or stability of the hearing loss over time;
5. discuss how the disability has an impact on the student in the academic environment; and
6. include recommended accommodations explaining the need for each as it relates to the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities.

Documentation Guidelines for Blind/Low Vision

Evaluator Qualifications

Ophthalmologists are the primary professionals involved in the diagnosis and treatment of individuals who are blind or experience low vision. Optometrists provide information regarding the measurement of visual acuity as well as tracking and fusion difficulties.

Current Documentation

The age of acceptable documentation is dependent on the condition, the current status of the student, and the student's request for accommodations.

Comprehensive Documentation

For the documentation to be comprehensive, it must:

1. provide a clear statement of vision-related disability with supporting numerical description that reflects the current impact that the blindness or vision loss has on the student's functioning;
2. include a summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and a summary of evaluation results including standardized scores;
3. present symptoms that meet the criteria for the diagnosis;
4. provide medical information relating to the student's needs and the status of the individual's vision (static or changing) and its impact on the demands of the academic program;
5. include a narrative or descriptive text providing both quantitative and qualitative information about the student's abilities that might be helpful in understanding the student's profile including the use of corrective lenses and ongoing visual therapy (if appropriate);
6. include a statement of the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities particularly as it relates to the learning context for which academic accommodations are being requested; and
7. include recommended accommodations explaining the need for each as it relates to the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities.

Documentation Guidelines for Psychological Disabilities

Evaluator Qualifications

A diagnosis by a licensed mental health professional (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist, licensed professional counselor (LPC), licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), neurologist) is required and must include the license number.

Current Documentation

The documentation is considered current if the related evaluation was conducted no more than **one year** prior to the student's request for accommodations.

Comprehensive Documentation

For the documentation to be comprehensive, it must:

1. identify a diagnosis of a psychological disorder according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fourth Edition-TR (DSM-IV-TR);
2. specify the nature, severity, current impact, and anticipated duration of the disability;
3. describe the expected progression or stability of the disability over time;
4. list current medication, dosages, and existing (not possible) side effects;
5. discuss functional limitations caused by the disability in an academic environment or the environment in which the student is requesting accommodations; and
6. include recommended accommodations explaining the need for each as it relates to the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities.

Documentation Guidelines for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders

Evaluator Qualifications

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) is considered a medical or clinical diagnosis. Thus, individuals qualified to render a diagnosis for this disorder are diagnosticians who have been trained in the assessment of AD/HD and are experienced in assessing the needs of adult learners. Recommended practitioners may include psychiatrists, licensed clinical or educational psychologists, other qualified mental health professionals, neurologists, relevantly trained physicians, or a combination of such professionals.

Current Documentation

The documentation is considered current if the related evaluation was conducted no more than **three years** prior to the student's request for accommodations.

Comprehensive Documentation

In order for the documentation to be considered comprehensive, it must . . .

1. identify the Axis diagnosis of ADD/ADHD according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fourth Edition-TR (DSM-IV-TR);
2. be thorough and discuss current problems associated with the diagnosis;
3. include relevant historical information that must address all of the following:
 - a. Evidence of early impairment
 - b. Family
 - c. Academic
 - d. Medical
 - e. Psychosocial
 - f. Employment;
4. address the ruling out of alternative diagnoses or explanations;
5. list current medication, dosages, and existing (not possible) side effects;
6. discuss functional limitations and symptoms caused by the disability as they pertain to the academic environment in which the student is requesting accommodations;
7. include recommended accommodations explaining the need for each as it relates to the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities.

Documentation Guidelines for Specific Learning Disabilities

Evaluator Qualifications

Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of specific learning disabilities (SLD) must be qualified. A qualified professional needs to hold a degree in a field related to the diagnosis of SLDs and have at least one year of diagnostic experience with adults and late adolescents. Recommended practitioners may include licensed psychologists, other qualified mental health professionals, and learning disabilities specialists.

Current Documentation

An evaluation performed *before age 18* is considered current only if the student's initial request for accommodations at RPCC is made within three years of the date of the evaluation. An evaluation performed *after age 18* is current if it is no more than five years old at the time that the student first requests accommodations at RPCC.

Comprehensive Documentation

Comprehensive documentation for a learning disability consists of a full psychoeducational evaluation.

All assessment instruments used in the evaluation must have age-appropriate norms for high school seniors, college freshmen, or older students. All standardized measures must be represented by standardized scores or percentile ranks based on published norms (grade equivalents are not useful without standardized scores). The report must be typed. Handwritten scores or summary sheets are not acceptable.

It is not acceptable for an evaluation to consist of only one test for the purpose of diagnosis. For the documentation to be considered comprehensive, it must:

1. include a diagnostic interview;
2. provide an assessment of the following domains
 - a. Aptitude—must include at least one of the following:
 - i. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised
 - ii. Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Test of Cognitive Ability
 - iii. Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence
 - iv. Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (4th Ed.)
 - b. Academic achievement--must include at least one of the following:
 - i. Scholastic Abilities for Adult
 - ii. Stanford Test of Academic Skills
 - iii. Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Test of Achievement
 - iv. Wechsler Individual Achievement Test
 - c. Information Processing;
3. provide a diagnosis according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fourth Edition-TR (DSM-IV-TR); and
4. provide a clinical summary with recommended accommodations including an explanation for the need for each accommodation as it relates to the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities.

Documentation for Temporary Medical Conditions

Students with temporary injuries (e.g., broken bones, recovery from surgery) are not eligible for formal accommodations but may benefit from services OCS can coordinate, such as extra time for examinations, use of a scribe, and note-taking assistance. Students with such injuries seeking academic assistance must provide supportive documentation to OCS and schedule an appointment with the Director of Counseling Services. The information that should be included in such documentation is outlined below. Individual faculty members have discretion as to whether allowances will be made for missed classes and/or fulfilling course requirements (e.g., examinations, presentations, participation) due to temporary injury or illness.

Accommodations for temporary disabilities are approved for a limited time period, not to exceed one semester. Updated documentation is required for services to be continued beyond the assigned date. Students approved for accommodations based upon a temporary disability will be provided a letter listing the temporary accommodations approved by OCS. It is the student's responsibility to present the letter to each instructor and discuss the implementation of these accommodations. Please do not hesitate to contact OCS (225-675-8270) if you have any questions.

Evaluator Qualifications

Documentation must be provided by a qualified professional, generally a physician; however, depending upon the nature of the temporary medical condition, other medical professionals may be considered qualified.

Documentation Requirements

Documentation must:

1. include a clear statement of the medical diagnosis of the orthopedic/mobility disability or systemic illness;
2. discuss the current impact of the physical disability or systemic illness on the student's functioning;
3. include a summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis, including evaluation results and standardized scores, if applicable;
4. provide a description of present symptoms that meet the criteria for diagnosis;
5. include medical information relating to the student's needs to include the impact of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment;
6. discuss functional limitations and symptoms caused by the disability as they pertain to the academic environment in which the student is requesting accommodations; and accommodation as it relates to the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities.

Reasonable accommodations are determined based on the nature of the medical condition.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations are provided not only on a case-by-case basis but also on a class-by-class basis. In other words, an accommodation that is reasonable in one class might not be reasonable in another. No accommodation will be provided if it compromises or alters essential elements or evaluation standards of a course.

Accommodations and services are considered to be classroom supplements. They are not intended to replace regular classroom participation or attendance. Additionally, accommodations are not a guarantee of a certain grade or of success in a particular class; rather, they are for the purpose of providing equal access to an education for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are expected to fulfill all academic and course requirements and evaluation standards, as expected of all students.

USING YOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

Semester Accommodations Request Form

In order to use your approved accommodations, you must submit a Semester Accommodations Request Form (see appendix for copy) each semester to OCS. Ideally, these forms will be submitted **at least one week prior to the start of the semester**.

After the Semester Accommodations Request Form has been submitted, OCS will prepare accommodations letters (see appendix for sample letter) for you to deliver to your instructor(s). These letters will notify the instructor(s) of accommodations that are to be provided for you. You will need to meet with each instructor to review your accommodations and to discuss how they will be implemented in each class.

How to Deliver Your Accommodation Letters

- During the first several days of the semester, introduce yourself to your instructors and schedule appointments with them during their office hours or at a mutually convenient time. By scheduling a meeting time, you will be able to discuss your accommodations in private.
- Be on time for your meeting.
- Use this meeting to work out any logistical arrangements regarding your accommodations. For example, if you have testing accommodations, it is important that you and your instructor develop a plan for testing arrangements. For your own benefit, keep a written record of any plans made (in other words, take notes.)
- In an effort to assist in the accommodation process, faculty members may ask for information beyond what they see in the accommodation letters. You should feel comfortable providing information that will assist in the delivery of your accommodations. If you choose, you may provide instructors with more specific information about your disability. This, however, is not required, and you are not obligated to give information that you feel is personal or that does not relate to the accommodations requested.

Instructor Meeting Form

This form is designed to help you schedule an appointment with an instructor and get the most out of that meeting. A copy of this form is included in the appendix.

REACTIVATING ACCOMMODATIONS

Once registered for services, students' files will remain active throughout their continuous enrollment at RPCC, unless other arrangements or timelines have been established with the approval of accommodations. The files of students who leave the College will be placed on inactive status. It is important to know that prior approval for accommodations does not mean that students will be automatically approved for similar accommodations when they return. Students who return to the college after being absent for one or more regular semesters (fall or spring) will be asked to meet with the Director of Counseling Services in order to reactivate their files. Students may be asked to present new documentation depending on factors such as the length of the time away from the College, the date of the original documentation, nature of the disability, and the original date through which accommodations were approved.

COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Informal Complaint Resolution Process

The informal resolution process shall apply to situations in which a student's request for an accommodation has been denied by the Office of Counseling Services and to those where a student is having difficulties with an instructor and his/her accommodations. Please read the sections that follow for more information.

Informal Complaint Resolution with OCS

Any student who disagrees with the academic accommodation(s) or other services determined by OCS should first speak with the Director of Counseling Services. The student should express his/her concerns and be prepared to offer alternative solutions. If the student is not satisfied with the proposed or provided accommodation, he/she should file a formal grievance with the Dean of Students.

Please remember that the College has an obligation to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to ensure that otherwise qualified students with disabilities have access to all College functions. However, if the College can provide an accommodation that is equally as effective as the one requested, the College is not required to provide the requested accommodation.

Informal Complaint Resolution with Instructors

Students have found faculty at River Parishes Community College accommodating and supportive. When difficulties with accommodations occur, it is often due to misunderstandings or miscommunication between parties. If a student has difficulty with a faculty member, he/she should first try to clarify his/her needs during an individual appointment or the instructor's office hours. If the student is not comfortable with this approach, the student may contact the Director of Counseling Services for assistance in speaking with the instructor. The Director of Counseling Services will work with the faculty member and the student to resolve the situation. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, he/she may submit a formal grievance with the Dean of Students.

Formal Grievances

Students who have not been able to resolve a complaint informally may file a formal grievance with the Dean of Students. Also, students who believe that they have been

discriminated against or harassed based upon a disability should also file a formal grievance.

To file a formal grievance, the the student must prepare a written statement of complaint or concern that includes the exact nature of the concern, involved parties, and any available written documentation or evidence that is relevant to the complaint. The Dean of Students will give consideration to all written submissions of complaint or concern and will determine the process for addressing the complaint appropriate to the nature of the complaint/concern. The student submitting the written complaint will receive written notification of action taken to address the complaint from the Dean of Students.

Students have the right to file complaints with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). OCR's contact information for the state of Louisiana is:

Dallas Office
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620
Dallas, Texas 75201-6810

Telephone: 214-661-9600
FAX: 214-661-9587; TDD: 877-521-2172
Email: OCR.Dallas@ed.gov

Student Conduct

Students with disabling conditions are subject to the provisions of River Parishes Community College's "Regulations Governing Student Behavior," which can be found in the General Catalog (www.rpcc.edu; Course Schedules). Any behavior that violates these policies is subject to sanctions up to and including dismissal from the College. The Americans with Disabilities Act does not protect behaviors alleged to be a consequence of the disabling condition.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Office of Financial Aid

Financial aid programs vary by type, source, eligibility criteria, and application procedures. Regardless of the type of assistance that you are seeking, you must be admitted to RPCC and have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)—www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA is used to determine eligibility for federal assistance programs. When completing the FAFSA, you will need to know **RPCC's Title IV school code number—037894**. The FAFSA is usually available by January for the following academic year. Many types of financial assistance are limited, so make sure to apply early.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

LRS is a vocational rehabilitation agency designed to assist persons with disabilities in gaining and maintaining suitable employment. Eligibility is based upon severity of disability. For additional information, call (225) 295-8900.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Office of Counseling Services (OCS)

In addition to determining accommodations for students with disabilities, the Office of Counseling Services provides a number of other services to students at River Parishes Community College. These services include academic, career, and personal counseling. For more information about these services, please call 225-675-8270.

Learning Resource Center (LRC)

The Learning Resource Center offers proctored testing services for students whose accommodations include testing in a distraction-reduced environment or extended time for testing. The LRC is located in C-119. The LRC's testing policies and times can be found on the College's web site (www.rpcc.edu, Library, Testing Services). The proctored testing request form is also available on the web site and in the appendix of this handbook.

Office of Financial Aid

See "Office of Financial Aid" in the previous section.

STATE AND LOCAL RESOURCES

Accessible Solutions of Louisiana

910 N. Vienna
Ruston, LA 71270
(318) 255-5853

Advocacy Center

2704 Wooddale Blvd., Suite B
Baton Rouge, LA 70805
(225) 925-8884

Alcohol Abuse & Crisis Intervention

1-800-234-0246

C.H.A.D.D. (Children & Adults with AD/HD)

Louisiana Capital Area
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-1121
(225) 261-0613

Epilepsy Foundation of Southeast Louisiana

3701 Canal St.
New Orleans, LA 70119
1-800-960-0587

LATAN (Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network)

3042 Old Forge Dr., Suite D
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
(225) 925-9500

Louisiana Commission for the Deaf

8225 Florida Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(225) 925-4175 (V/TTY)

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

3651 Cedarcrest Ave.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(225) 295-8900 (V)
(225) 295-8959 (TTY)

Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation

2301 North Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(225) 346-8434

ADA Hotline

P.O. Box 1471
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
(225) 389-7800

AIDS/Friends for Life Services

660 N. Foster Dr., Bldg. C-100
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(225) 923-2277

Baton Rouge Mental Health Center

4615 Government St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(225) 925-1906

Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge

9150 Bereford Dr.
Baton Rouge, LA 70809
(225) 926-2844

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
(225) 219-7550

Louisiana Association for the Deaf

3112 Valley Creek, Suite C
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
(225) 923-1266 (V/TTY)

Louisiana Hotlines for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

701 N. 4th St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5345
(225) 342-4944

Resources for Independent Living

5700 Florida Blvd., Suite 600
Baton Rouge, LA 70816
(225) 216-3844

The Phone

(225) 924-5781

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board

1331 F St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20530
1-800-872-2253 (V/TTY)

Department of Transportation

400 Seventh St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20590
(202) 366-4000 (V)
(202) 366-9696 (TTY)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

1801 L St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20507
(202) 663-4900 (V)
1-800-800-3302 (TTY)

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

445 12th St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20004-1111
1-800-872-2253 (V/TTY)

Job Accommodations Network (JAN)

West Virginia University
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
1-800-526-7234
Email: jan@jan.icdi.wvu.edu
Web: www.jan.wvu.edu

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

Dallas Office
U.S. Department of Education
1999 Bryan St., Suite 2600
Dallas, TX 75201
(214) 880-2459
(214) 880-2456 (TTY)
E-mail: OCR_Dallas@ed.gov

Office on the ADA

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Disability Rights Section-NYAV
Washington, D.C. 20530
1-800-514-0301 (V)
1-800-514-0383 (TTY)

The ADA Project

2323 S. Shepherd, Suite 1000
Houston, TX 77019
1-800-949-4232

APPENDIX

Application for Accommodations
Application to Reactivate Accommodations
Information Release Form
Semester Accommodations Request Form
Sample Accommodation Letter
Instructor Meeting Form
RPCC Library Services Proctored Testing Request Form

RIVER PARISHES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Office of Counseling Services
P.O. Box 310 ♦ Sorrento, LA 70778 ♦ (225) 675-8270

Application for Accommodations

Students applying for accommodations must complete all sections of this form and submit it with disability documentation. Incomplete forms and those without documentation will not be processed.

A. Student's Biographic and Contact Information

Note: For privacy reasons, all contact information entered below **must be the student's** contact information.

SS# _____ Today's Date _____

Name _____
Last First Middle

Address _____
Street

_____ City State Zip Code

Phone _____
Home Work Cell

E-mail _____ Birth Date _____

Gender: Male Female

B. Disability Information

Disability Type (check all that apply)

ADD/ADHD Blind/low vision Upper body coordination

Learning Speech Acquired brain injury

Psychological Mobility Chronic Illness

Deaf/hard of hearing Other _____

continued on other side

Check the accommodations you think you may need.

- Extended time on tests Scribe Tape recorder in class
- Distraction-reduced testing environment Interpreter Enlarged text (font size _____)
- Volunteer note taker Computer/spellchecker
- Other _____
- _____
- _____

Note: The diagnostic documentation provided will be used to determine whether or not the accommodations marked above are appropriate and necessary.

C. Signature

By my signature below, I certify that I have read and understand the following:

- Information about my disability will be released to the Director of Counseling Services (or Disability Services Coordinator) and may be shared with RPCC officials and employees for the purpose of coordinating accommodations and services.
- I must provide **current and comprehensive documentation*** of my disability, which must substantially limit a major life activity, with this application. My application for accommodations will not be considered without the required documentation.
- **An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is NOT suitable documentation and will be returned to the student*.**
- This release will serve for the duration of my enrollment at RPCC unless otherwise requested.

Signature

Date

*For more details, refer to the Documentation Guidelines section of this handbook.

Completed Application for Accommodations forms and diagnostic documentation should be returned to:

Director of Counseling Services
P.O. Box 310
7384 John LeBlanc Blvd.
Sorrento, LA 70778

River Parishes Community College operates in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, of the 1962 Educational Amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or veteran status. The College is also in compliance with the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-380) as amended by the (P.L. 95-568).

RIVER PARISHES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Office of Counseling Services
P.O. Box 310 ♦ Sorrento, LA 70778 ♦ (225) 675-8270

Application to Reactivate Accommodations

Students who previously received accommodations at River Parishes Community College, are re-entering the College, and want to receive accommodations must complete this form. Please note that new disability documentation may be required. You will be notified by the Office of Counseling Services if current documentation is needed.

C. Student's Biographic and Contact Information

*Note: For privacy reasons, all contact information entered below **must be the student's** contact information.*

SS# _____ Today's Date _____

Name _____
Last First Middle

Address _____
Street

_____ City State Zip Code

Phone _____
Home Work Cell

E-mail _____ Birth Date _____

Gender: Male Female

D. Disability Information

Disability Type (*check all that apply*)

ADD/ADHD Blind/low vision Upper body coordination

Learning Speech Acquired brain injury

Psychological Mobility Chronic Illness

Deaf/hard of hearing Other _____

continued on other side

Check the accommodations you think you may need.

- Extended time on tests Scribe Tape recorder in class
- Distraction-reduced Testing environment Interpreter Enlarged text (font size _____)
- Volunteer note taker Computer/spellchecker
- Other _____

Note: The diagnostic documentation provided will be used to determine whether or not the accommodations marked above are appropriate and necessary.

C. Signature

By my signature below, I certify that I have read and understand the following:

- Information about my disability will be released to the Director of Counseling Services (or Disability Services Coordinator) and may be shared with RPCC officials and employees for the purpose of coordinating accommodations and services.
- In addition to completing this application and prior to receiving services, I may be required to provide **current and comprehensive documentation*** of my disability, which must substantially limit a major life activity. The Office of Counseling Services will review my current request for accommodations and my previous documentation to determine if that documentation can still be used to determine eligibility for accommodations.
- This release will serve for the duration of my enrollment at RPCC unless otherwise requested.

Signature

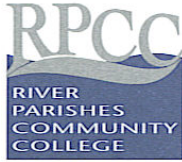
Date

*For more details, refer to the Documentation Guidelines section of this handbook.

Completed Application to Reactive Accommodations forms should be returned to:

Director of Counseling Services
P.O. Box 310
7384 John LeBlanc Blvd.
Sorrento, LA 70778

River Parishes Community College operates in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, of the 1962 Educational Amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or veteran status. The College is also in compliance with the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-380) as amended by the (P.L. 95-568).



INFORMATION RELEASE

Instructions: Complete ALL sections below. This form will be accepted only if submitted by the student requesting the release of information.

I, _____, authorize River Parishes Community College to release the information identified below to _____
_____.

Information to be released (check those that apply):

- All information regarding my educational record (e.g., grades, semester schedule, etc.)
- All information concerning my disability and accommodations
- Other: _____

This release is effective for the following period:

Start Date

End Date

Student's Printed Name

Social Security Number

Signature of Student

Date

Semester Accommodations Request Form

Instructions: To use accommodations already approved by the Office of Counseling Services, complete this form at the start of each semester. The Office of Counseling Services will then prepare your accommodation letters, which you will deliver to your instructors. Please allow three to five business days for your letters to be prepared.

Name SSN or ID #

Street or P.O. Box Address City State Zip

Phone Number E-mail

Semester and Year for Which
Accommodations Are Being Requested

I am requesting to use my approved accommodations in the following classes:

_____ Department	_____ Number	_____ Section	_____ Department	_____ Number	_____ Section
_____ Department	_____ Number	_____ Section	_____ Department	_____ Number	_____ Section
_____ Department	_____ Number	_____ Section	_____ Department	_____ Number	_____ Section
_____ Department	_____ Number	_____ Section	_____ Department	_____ Number	_____ Section

Signature of Student

Date

Sample Accommodation Letter:



P.O. Box 310 • 7384 John LeBlanc Blvd. • Sorrento • Louisiana • 70778
(225) 675-8270 • FAX (225) 675-5478 • <http://rpcc.cc.la.us>

Date: July 31, 2007
To: Albert Einstein, Instructor
From: Ashley Gray, Director of Counseling Services
RE: River Parishes (89-111-1111), ENGL 1010 D01

The above-named student has a documented disability that has been verified by the Office of Counseling Services. He/she is to receive reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Therefore, the following accommodations have been approved for this student:

- notes provided by instructor or classmate
- extended time (time and a half) for testing
- testing in a distraction-reduced environment

Please discuss each accommodation with the student so that it is appropriate to the student's needs and the format of your course. **As this information is CONFIDENTIAL, please do not discuss this information with the student in front of others.** If you have any questions or would like assistance with this process, please call me at 225-675-8270.

After reviewing these accommodations with the student, **please sign and return the original copy of this letter to me.** Students and instructors may make copies of this letter for their records. Copies should be filed in a location that will insure the student's confidentiality.

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

Signature of Instructor _____ Date _____

Instructor Meeting Form

Step 1: Make an appointment with your instructor.

Instructor's Name _____

Telephone # _____ E-mail _____

Course Title _____

Appointment Date _____ Time _____ Location _____

Step 2: Prepare for the meeting.

Is there any information that you would like to share about yourself or your disability and how it relates to your academic performance? If so, use the space below to note this.

List below any questions that you want to ask your instructor about this course.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Step 3: Evaluate the meeting.

How do you think the meeting went?

Is there anything else you could have done to make it better?

Do you need to follow up with this instructor? Yes No

Are there any special plans that you made regarding your accommodations and how to make them work?
If so, use the space below to create a written record of those plans.

RPCC Library Services Proctored Testing Request

This form must be completed and attached to each test.

Instructor _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail _____

Course _____ Section _____

Test Name/Identifier _____ Max time allowed for test _____

Test Start Date _____ Test End Date _____

(Please check if students can only take the test at a certain time.)
Exact start time: _____ Is up to 10 minutes after this time allowed? Yes No

A. Write the full name of the student authorized to take the test in the space below. Also, write the student's name on the corresponding test.

FULL NAME: _____

Identification is required to take any proctored test.

B. Check the box next to each applicable statement.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| Student is allowed to leave the room during testing | - | - | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student is allowed to write on the test | - | - | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student must use the instructor-supplied Scantron answer sheet | - | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student must use the instructor-supplied non-scannable answer sheet | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student is allowed to use a calculator (silent and battery operated) | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student is allowed to use math or statistics tables | - | - | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student is allowed to use the Periodic Table | - | - | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student is allowed to use notes | - | - | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student is allowed to use their open textbook | - | - | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student is allowed to use scratch paper | - | - | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student must return scratch paper with test | - | - | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other materials/instructions _____

C. Special Needs: YES or NO

If 'Yes', please provide description of special requirements:

Both pages 1 and 2 of this form MUST be submitted with the test.

All individual tests must be paper-clipped to their corresponding *Proctored Testing Request* form. No exceptions.

RPCC Library Services Proctored Testing Service Faculty Requirements for Submitting and Collecting Tests

To ensure that tests are processed accurately, please take note of the following requirements:

I. PREPARING TESTS FOR USE IN LIBRARY SERVICES

- a. ***Label all tests with the instructor's name, the course name and section number, and the test name or number.*** Library Services will use this information for filing an instructor's tests.
- b. Inform all students they **must** make an appointment for proctored testing.

II. SUBMITTING TESTS TO LIBRARY SERVICES

- a. A completed *Proctored Testing Request* form **must** be paper-clipped to each individual test.
- b. Submit tests **at least 24 hours** before the starting date of the test if possible. This allows Library Services time to prepare for issuance to students and to ensure strict adherence to faculty testing requirements as indicated on the *Proctored Testing Request* form.
- c. ***Any test not accompanied by and paper-clipped to an official Proctored Testing Request form will not be accepted.***

III. COLLECTING TESTS FROM LIBRARY SERVICES

- a. Each faculty member is assigned a pick-up folder in which all completed tests, expired tests, and any other testing information will be placed.
- b. Faculty must pick up the completed tests from Library Services. Faculty ID may be required.

IV. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- a. Library Services will **not** accept any *Proctored Testing Request* forms or tests from a student. We will not give the student the opportunity to alter the form or test before the proctored exam.

Library Services Use Only (Below this Line)

Student signature _____ Identified by proctor or instructor.

Proctor's signature _____ Identified by picture ID.

Start time _____ End time _____ Date _____

Faculty pick-up signature _____ Date _____