

River Parishes Community College

HANDBOOK FOR DISABILITIES

Policies, Procedures, and Resources



Office of Student Services and Enrollment Management

925 West Edenborne Parkway

Gonzales, LA 70737

Phone: (225) 743 - 8500; Fax: (225) 644 – 8210

www.rpcc.edu

River Parishes Community College, a member of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons located at 925 W. Edenborne Pkwy., Gonzales, LA non-discrimination policies: M. Francine Miguel - Title IX Coordinator, Shalither Cushenbery - Section 504 Coordinator.

Table of Contents

Mission.....	4
College	4
Disability Support Services (Disability Support Services)	5
Eligibility for Services.....	5
Disability Laws in Postsecondary Education	5
The Rehabilitation Act	5
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	6
The ADA in Relation to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	6
Disability Definition	6
Admittance to the College	7
Confidentiality	7
Rights & Responsibilities.....	8
Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities	8
Rights and Responsibilities of the Faculty and Staff	9
Rights and Responsibilities of DSS	9
Disability Parking	11
Registering for Services	11
Documentation Guidelines.....	13
Documentation Guidelines for All Disabilities	13
Documentation Guidelines for Physical Disabilities and Systemic Illnesses	14
Documentation Guidelines for Deaf and Hard of Hearing	15
Documentation Guidelines for Blind/Low Vision	16
Documentation Guidelines for Psychological Disabilities	17
Documentation Guidelines for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders	18
Documentation Guide for Specific Learning Disabilities	19
Documentation for Temporary Medical Conditions	21
A Few Words about Accommodations	22
Using Your Accommodations.....	22
Semester Accommodations Request Form	22
Instructor Meeting Form.....	23
Reactivating Accommodations	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Complaint and Grievance Procedures	23
Informal Complaint Resolution Process	23
Informal Complaint Resolution with DSS.....	23
Informal Complaint Resolution with Instructors	24
Formal Grievances	24
Student Conduct	25
Financial Assistance	25
Office of Financial Aid	25
Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.....	25
Campus Resources	25
Disability Support Services (DSS).....	25
Library Services.....	25
Office of Financial Aid	25
State and Local Resources	26
National Resources.....	28
Appendix.....	30

River Parishes Community College

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 Associate's 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 (Disability Support Services)

Disability Support Services (DSS) 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. DSS 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 Disability Support Services by completing an Application for Accommodations, and
- Has presented appropriate documentation regarding the disability as required by the Disability Support Services (see section entitled "Documentation Guidelines") and requires accommodations.

Note: Accommodations are effective after the documentation has been reviewed and approved by DSS. Accommodations are not retroactive. Also, documentation required by DSS 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 Disability Support Services, located in the Office of Student Services and Enrollment Management. This office may be reached at (225) 743-8500.

The Americans with Disabilities 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 Student 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 DSS a signed release (see appendix) to share disability-related information with the person(s) named on the release;
- When DSS 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 a DSS staff member. **DSS does not provide copies of documentation. This information should be obtained from the originator of the documentation.** DSS 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 DSS. 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 DSS procedures with instructors and DSS;
- Make an appointment with instructors to facilitate privacy when requesting and discussing accommodations;
- Provide instructor(s) each semester with the accommodation letters from DSS in a timely manner;
- Communicate needs and concerns with an DSS 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 DSS 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 DSS 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 DSS) in a timely manner, either independently or in collaboration with DSS;
- 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 DSS;
- 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 DSS;
- 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 DSS; and
- Contact DSS when an accommodation might violate an essential component of the course, program, or activity.

Rights and Responsibilities of DSS

DSS 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.

DSS 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 DSS staff, accommodations, or available equipment.

Disability Parking

River Parishes Community College provides accessible parking spaces reserved for students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities. To park in one of these spaces, you must display a mobility impaired 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, or your car may be towed.

If you do not have a state hangtag but need to park in an accessible parking space because of a temporary disability, you may contact the Office of Student Services and Enrollment Management to see if you qualify for an RPCC accessible parking permit. Persons with an official state hangtag do not need an RPCC accessible parking permit to park in accessible parking spaces.

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

Registering for Services

Students with disabilities that affect academic functioning may register for services with the Disability Support Services. To begin this process, students must submit current and comprehensive documentation of the disability along with a completed documentation cover sheet (see appendix) to the following address:

Disability Services & Advising Coordinator
River Parishes Community College
P.O. Box 2367
Gonzales, LA 70707

Upon receiving these documents, the Disability Support Services will determine if the student is eligible for services. Please note that 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.

Students will be notified of their eligibility status by mail and/or e-mail. Eligible students will then be instructed to schedule a meeting with the Disability Services and Advising Coordinator. During this meeting, students will complete a registration form, and accommodations will be reviewed. By completing this registration form, students become registered with the Disability Support Services and are then eligible to use their accommodations (see section entitled "Using Your Accommodations" for more information).

Students who are denied accommodations due to a lack of sufficient documentation are encouraged to submit additional documentation. Those who have scheduled assessments or medical examinations in order to obtain additional documentation may request temporary approval of accommodations pending the timely receipt of assessment information by the Disability Support Services.

Unless otherwise noted, accommodations approved by the Disability Support 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 Disability Support Services. Documentation should not be no more than three years old, 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 Disability Support 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

- 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.
- Evaluations must be performed by a professional who is licensed or certified to evaluate and diagnose the particular disability.
- The professional conducting the assessment must be impartial and cannot be a family member.
- An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan is NOT always sufficient documentation to determine eligibility. More documentation may be requested if an IEP is the only documentation turned in.
- 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 six 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 (Medical) Disabilities and Systemic Illnesses

Students with physical disabilities and systemic illnesses are eligible to receive accommodations. There are a wide variety of disabilities that may be categorized as physical and systemic disabilities. These particular types of disabilities may be definitive physical causes and may significantly impact the physical functioning of the student with the disability which could result in extensive limitation of one or more major life activities. 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, etc.) 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: (DSM);
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: Fifth Edition (DSM-5);
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 Guide 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: Fifth Edition (DSM-5); 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 DSS 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 DSS and schedule an appointment with the Disability Services and Advising Coordinator. 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 DSS. 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 DSS at 225-743-8500 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:

6. Include a clear statement of the medical diagnosis of the orthopedic/mobility disability or systemic illness;
7. Discuss the current impact of the physical disability or systemic illness on the student's functioning;
8. Include a summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis, including evaluation results and standardized scores, if applicable;
9. Provide a description of present symptoms that meet the criteria for diagnosis;
10. 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;
11. 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, therefore, an accommodation that is reasonable in one class may 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 each semester to DSS (see sample in appendix). To ensure that you receive your accommodation letter at the start of the semester, be sure to complete the Semester Accommodations Request Form **at least six weeks prior to the start of the semester**.

After the Semester Accommodations Request Form has been submitted, DSS will prepare and notify you by e-mail the accommodations letter is ready for pick up in the Office of Student Services (see appendix for sample letter). It is then your responsibility to pick up and deliver the letters to your instructors. These letters will notify the instructors 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.
- Make sure you get their signature on the letter so that you can deliver the signed letter back to DSS.
- 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, via email or written notes.

- In an effort to assist in the accommodation process, faculty members may ask for information beyond what they see in the accommodation letters. However, providing additional essential information to instructors should they need it, may assist in delivery of your accommodation (s). 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.

Accommodations for Returning Students

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 initial approval of accommodations. A returning student is defined as one who comes back to the college after being away for one or more regular semesters (fall or spring). The files of returning students will be placed on inactive status. It is important to know that prior approval for accommodations does not guarantee that students will be automatically approved for similar accommodations when they return. Returning students will be asked to meet with the Disability Services and Advising Coordinator 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 Disability Support 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 DSS

Any student who disagrees with the academic accommodation(s) or other services offered by DSS should first speak with the Disability Services and Advising Coordinator. 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 Chief Student Affairs Officer.

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, then the College is not required to provide the requested accommodation.

Informal Complaint Resolution with Instructors

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 Disability Services and Advising Coordinator for assistance in speaking with the instructor. The Disability Services and Advising Coordinator 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 Chief Student Affairs Officer.

Formal Grievances

Students who have not been able to resolve a complaint informally may file a formal grievance with the Chief Student Affairs Officer. 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 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 Chief Student Affairs Officer 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 Chief Student Affairs Officer.

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) 616-9600
Fax: (214) 661-9587
TDD: (877) 521-2172
E-mail: 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 [RPCC General Catalog](https://www.rpcc.edu/academics/catalogs/), <https://www.rpcc.edu/academics/catalogs/>. 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 \(FAFSA\)](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov), 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

Disability Support Services (DSS)

In addition to determining accommodations for students with disabilities, the Disability Support 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 225-743-8526.

Library Services

In addition to proctored testing that may be given by DSS, the Library provides proctored testing which students who are registered with DSS may use if it fits with their accommodations.

Office of Financial Aid

See "Office of Financial Aid" under Financial Assistance, above.

State and Local Resources

State and Local Resources for Persons with Disabilities

Organization	Address	Contact Information
<u>Accessible Healthcare Solutions, LLC</u>	2900 Military Hwy., Pineville, LA 71360	(318) 445-2286 www.accessiblehealth.org
Louisiana ADA Hotline	P. O. Box 1471 Baton Rouge, LA 70821	(225) 389-7800
Advocacy Center for Louisiana	530 Lakeland Dr. Baton Rouge, LA 70805	(225) 925-8884
AIDS/Friends for Life Services	660 N. Foster Drive. Building C-100 Baton Rouge, LA 70806	(225) 923-2277
<u>Capital Area Human Services</u>	4615 Government St. Baton Rouge, LA 70806	(225) 925-1906
<u>C.H.A.D.D.</u> (Children & Adults with AD/HD)	Louisiana Capital Area Baton Rouge, LA 70821-1121	(225) 261-0613 http://lachadd.org
Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge	3488 Partridge LN Rouge, LA 70809	(225) 923-0328
<u>Epilepsy Foundation of Southeast Louisiana</u>	4137 Sherwood Forest Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70816	(225)298-5499 1-800-960-0587 www.epilepsy.com/louisiana
<u>Governor's Office of Disability Affairs</u>	P.O. Box 94004 Baton Rouge, LA 70804	(225) 219-7550 (844) 860-1413 Disability.affairs@la.gov http://Gov.louisiana.gov/page/disability-affairs

Organization	Address	Contact Information
<u>LATAN</u> (Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network)	3042 Old Forge Dr., Suite D Baton Rouge, LA 70808	(225) 925-9500 https://www.latan.org/
<u>Louisiana Association for the Deaf</u>	3112 Valley Creek, Suite C Baton Rouge, LA 70808	(225) 341-6406 (V/TTY) www.lad1908.org
<u>Louisiana Commission for the Deaf</u>	628 N. Fourth St. Baton Rouge, LA 70802	1-800-256-1523 http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov
<u>State Library of Louisiana Services for the Blind & Physically Handicapped</u>	701 N. 4th St. Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5345	(225) 342-4944 1-800-543-4702 http://www.state.lib.la.us/special-services/tbb/
<u>Louisiana Rehabilitation Services</u>	3651 Cedarcrest Ave. Baton Rouge, LA 70806	(225) 295-8900 (V) (225) 295-8959 (TTY) 1-800-737-2959 www.laworks.net/workforceDev/LRS/LRS_RegionalOffices.asp
Resources for Independent Living	3233 S. Sherwood Forest Blvd. Suite 3 Baton Rouge, LA 70816	(225) 753-4772
<u>Baton Rouge Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation</u>	2301 North Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70806	(225) 346-8434 http://brscaf.org/
<u>The Phone-Crisis Intervention</u>	No local address	(225) 924-3900 http://cicla.org/

National Resources

National Resources for Persons with Disabilities

Organization	Address	Contact Information
<u>Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board</u>	1331 F St., NW Washington, D.C. 20530	1-800-872-2253 (V) 1-800-993-2822 (TTY) www.access-board.gov
<u>Federal Transit Administration: Civil Rights/ADA</u>	U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE Washington, D.C. 20590	(888) 446-4511 (202) 366-4000 (V) (202) 366-9696 (TTY) 1-855-368-4200
<u>Equal Employment Opportunity Commission</u>	131 M. Street, NE Washington, D.C. 20507	(202) 663-4900 (V) 1-800-800-3302 (TTY) www.eeoc.gov
<u>Federal Communications Commission (FCC)</u>	445 12th St., SW Washington, D.C. 20554	1-800-225-5322 (V/TTY) 1-844-432-2275 (ASL)
<u>Job Accommodations Network (JAN)</u>	West Virginia University P.O. Box 6080 Morgantown, WV 26506-6080	1-800-526-7234 (V) 1-800-781-9403 (TTY) Email: jan@jan.icdi.wvu.edu Web: www.jan.wvu.edu
<u>Office for Civil Rights (OCR)</u>	Southwest Region of Health & Human Services 1301 Young St., Suite 1169 Dallas, TX 75202	1-800-537-7697 (214) 880-2456 (TTY) E-mail: OCRmail@hhs.gov
<u>Disability Rights Section, Civil Rights Division, U. S. Department of Justice</u>	950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW Disability Rights Section- NYAV Washington, D.C. 20530	1-800-514-0301 (V) 1-800-514-0383 (TTY)
<u>ADA National Network</u> <u>Southwest ADA Center, serving Louisiana.</u>	Region 6 TIRR Memorial Herman Research Center 1333 Moursund St. Houston, TX 77019	713-520-0232 (V) https://adata.org Email: swdbtacc@ilrv.org Web: http://www.southwestada.org/

Testing Referrals

Testing Referral Services

Organization	Address	Contact Information
Assessment & Psychology Services	5253 Dijon Dr., Ste. E Baton Rouge, LA 70808	(225) 769-8335
Capital Area Human Services District	4315 Government St. Baton Rouge, LA 70806	(225) 922-0050
Jefferson Neurobehavioral Group	6555 Perkins Rd., Ste. 500 Baton Rouge, LA 70808	(225) 368-2297
Louisiana Rehabilitation Services	3651 Cedarcrest Ave. Baton Rouge, LA 70816	(225) 295-8900
LSU Psychological Services Center	B-31 Johnston Hall Baton Rouge, LA 70803	(225) 578-1494
The NeuroMedical Center	10101 Park Rowe Ave., Ste. 200 Baton Rouge, LA 70810	(225) 769-2200
Nicholls State University Learning Resource Center	University Station Hwy. 1 Thibodeaux, LA 70310	(985) 448-4310

Appendix

The following pages include these sample documents:

- Disability Services Application
- Sample Accommodation Letter
- Semester Accommodations Request Form
- Instructor Meeting Form

Disability Support Services Application

Students seeking accommodations **must complete ALL sections** of this form and submit it with disability documentation. Students who previously received accommodations at River Parishes Community College, are re-entering the College, and/or want to receive accommodations must complete this form. Please note that new disability documentation may be required. You will be notified by Disability Support Services if current or additional supporting documentation is needed.

A. Student's Biographic and Contact Information

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

Applicant Type New Continuing Re-entry Semester Request Fall Spring Summer

Student ID# _____ Today's Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Numbers _____

E-mail _____ Birthdate Male Female

Emergency Contact _____ Relationship _____

B. Disability Information

Disability Type (check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADD/ADHD | <input type="checkbox"/> Acquired brain injury | <input type="checkbox"/> Neurological |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blind/low vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upper body coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility | <input type="checkbox"/> Seizures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic Illness | <input type="checkbox"/> Service Animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speech | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf/hard of hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Specific Diagnosis(es) _____

Specific Accommodations Requested _____

Check the accommodations you think you may need.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extended time on tests | <input type="checkbox"/> Distraction-reduced testing environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer note taker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scribe | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer/spellchecker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tape recorder in class | <input type="checkbox"/> Enlarged text (font size) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Note: The diagnostic documentation provided will be used to determine whether the accommodations marked above are appropriate and necessary.

C. CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT & OPTIONAL RELEASE CLAUSE

Information about your disability may be shared, with RPCC officials and employees only as necessary to coordinate accommodations and services. Otherwise, this information is considered strictly confidential (Additional information on confidentiality is available in the RPCC Handbook for Students with Disabilities). If you would like for Disability Support Services to be able to discuss issues related to your disability with anyone such as a parent, guardian, doctor, psychologist, etc., please fill in that information below. Unless you specify a different end date, the permission will remain in effective until you notify us in writing or until you have not attended RPCC for one full semester.

Optional Release of Disability Information (You may choose to leave this section blank.)

Name(s) of and Relationship(s) to Individuals in Disability Information Release

Other End Date

Signature

Today's Date

D. Signature

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

- Information about my disability will be released to the Disability Services & Advising 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. Disability Support 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.
- An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan is NOT always sufficient documentation when determining eligibility. More documentation may be requested if an IEP is the only documentation submitted.
- This release will serve for the duration of my enrollment at RPCC unless otherwise requested.

Signature

Date

*For more details, refer to the Section IV (Documentation Guidelines) of the information sheet "Applying for Accommodations at River Parishes Community College."

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

Disability Services Personnel

Gonzales Mailing:
P.O. Box 2367
Gonzales, LA 70707
225-743-8526

Reserve Mailing:
181 Regala Park Rd.
Reserve LA, 70084
985-536-4418, Ext: 212

Plaquemine Mailing:
25250 Tenant Rd.
Plaquemine, LA 70764
225-687-5500

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 3 to 5 business days for your letters to be prepared.

Name Student 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

See Attached!

Signature of Student

Date

River Parishes Community College, a member of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons located at 925 W. Edenborne Pkwy., Gonzales, LA non-discrimination policies Julian Surla- Title IX Coordinator, Shalither Cushenberry- Section 504 Coordinator.



925 West Edenborne Parkway • P. O. Box 2367 • Gonzales • LA • 70707

(225) 743-8500 • Fax (225) 644-8210 • www.rpcc.edu

TO: Instructor

FROM: Shalither S. Cushenberry, M. Ed., Disability Services & Advising Coordinator

DATE: May 29, 2020

RE: Summer 2020 Accommodations for **Shannon Doe (L01234567)**

CC: Dale A. Doty, Ph.D., Chancellor
Julian Surla, M. Ed., Chief Student Affairs Officer

Please be advised that this matter must remain confidential as required by state and federal law. Release no details related thereto, in any form, without the written consent of the student.

Shannon Doe has a disability which substantially impairs several life functions. Based upon medical evidence validated by the Disability Services Coordinator, the following reasonable accommodations at River Parishes Community College are hereby approved for the above-named student:

- Extended time (time and half) for testing
- Use of a calculator on math related questions and/or tests

Civil rights laws require accommodation in any non-essential element of academic program in order to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities. Under no circumstances should any accommodation result in a fundamental alteration to any essential component of your course; students with disabilities must meet or exceed academic standards with or without reasonable accommodations. If you feel that an accommodation fundamentally alters an essential component of your course, please contact the Office of Student Services.

Please discuss each accommodation with the student to ensure accommodations meet the student’s needs and aligns with the format of your course. Please be reminded that since this information is confidential, you are asked to refrain from discussing this matter with others or in front of others. If you have any questions or would like assistance with this process, please call **225-743-8526**.

Attention Faculty: After reviewing this letter with the student, please sign and return the original copy of this letter to the student. It is the student’s responsibility to return the original copy of this letter to the Disability Services Coordinator in the Office of Student Services within the first 10 class days or 10 days following the issue date, whichever is applicable. Your copy should be filed in a location that will maintain the student’s confidentiality.

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Faculty Member

Date

Course Department: _____ Course Number: _____ Course Section: _____

Instructor Meeting Form

Step 1: Make an appointment with your instructor.

Instructor's Name _____

Telephone Number _____ Email _____

Course Title _____

Appointment Date _____ Time _____ Location _____

Step 2: Prepare for the meeting.

Is there any information 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 any questions below you would like to ask your instructor about this course.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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.