

## **I. OFFICES OF TESTING AND ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (TAS) AND INTERPRETER SERVICES (IS)**

### **A. Policy Statement**

Vital to the larger mission of East Central University, Testing and Accessibility Services (TAS) works to promote independence and inclusion while pursuing innovation in services for students with disabilities. We are committed to ensuring access to educational programs and activities for all students. We recognize disability as an important facet of diversity that enhances the learning experience for all students at East Central University. We will serve as a resource for the University by providing academic access to students with disabilities.

### **B. Function of Staff Members**

The following is a brief summary of the functions of staff members in Testing and Accessibility Services (TAS) and Interpreter Services (IS). In addition to the listed duties, staff also routinely perform a variety of other activities to provide services to students with disabilities and the ECU community as required by law and University policy.

#### **Director:**

The Director of Testing and Accessibility Services supervises the overall administrative operations including, but not limited to, managing staff and promoting campus-wide efforts to provide access.

During an intake meeting, the student's expressed needs are reviewed with the Director. The submitted documentation of a disability will be evaluated, eligibility for services determined, and any requests for reasonable accommodations will be discussed. The appropriateness of an accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis and involves the student and the TAS Director.

#### **Interpreter Services Coordinator:**

The Coordinator is responsible for planning, managing and directing the delivery of interpreter services and related program services for university Deaf and hard of hearing students.

The Coordinator is also responsible for meeting with Deaf and hard of hearing students prior to enrollment. The Coordinator supervises the scheduling of student classes and co-advising Deaf and hard of hearing students in their major.

#### **Accommodation Specialist:**

With input from faculty and students, the Accommodation Specialist will coordinate and supervise the implementation of student accommodations. Students are responsible for notifying the Accommodation Specialist to receive testing accommodations, note taking,

and the use of assistive technology in order to receive reasonable accommodations for coursework. Students are also responsible for informing the Accommodation Specialist of course materials they need in an alternate format in a timely manner.

**Sign Language Interpreters:**

Sign Language Interpreters facilitate communication between Deaf or hard of hearing students and their hearing peers, faculty members, and school administrators in order to ensure an equal opportunity to perform in the post-secondary setting.

**Student Workers:**

Testing and Accessibility Services employs student workers to support the office in providing necessary services. This may include providing direct services to students such as proctoring or serving as note takers.

**II. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS REQUESTING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

**A. Prior to Admission**

If an applicant requires accommodations to facilitate the admission process, the applicant should make his/her needs known to TAS or IS prior to their visit.

Admission to the University is based upon requirements established by the Office of Admissions in accordance to University policy. Admission decisions are made without regard to disabilities. All prospective students are expected to present academic credentials that meet or exceed the minimum requirements for admissions. Information about the University's admission requirements is available from the office of Admissions and Records, Administration, 1100 East 14<sup>th</sup>, Ada, OK 74820, 580.559.5628.

**B. After Admission**

It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodations. A student or prospective student is not obligated to self-identify as a student with a disability, unless he/she is requesting accommodations from the University.

A student with a disability may request accommodations by contacting TAS or IS to schedule an intake appointment. Students are requested to send their current documentation of disability to TAS or IS, in advance of their intake appointment. The documentation will be evaluated according to established TAS or IS guidelines. These guidelines will be furnished by TAS or IS upon request.

Timely requests are crucial to the process of facilitating accommodations. Retroactive accommodations will not be provided. A student who is requesting accommodations that

require significant lead time such as books in an alternate format (e.g., e-text, or Braille), or a Sign Language Interpreter should make those needs known as far in advance as possible.

### **C. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information**

Disability documentation is considered confidential information and does not become part of a student's permanent record. Disability information is housed in the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services unless the student submits the documentation to another campus department. Copies of disability documentation are not provided to anyone. Students can request a copy of the documentation in their file. The request should be made in writing, and a photo ID should be presented.

If a student requests information from their file to be released to another office on campus, or to an individual or group outside of campus, he/she must sign a Release of Information Authorization form. This form can be found in the Testing and Accessibility Services Office in Fentem Hall Room 302 or in Interpreter Services Fentem Hall 200

### **D. Evaluating Requests for Reasonable Accommodations**

In evaluating requests for accommodation, TAS and IS shall consider the following criteria, as they apply to each request.

1. Whether the disability documentation meets established guidelines.
2. Whether the disability documentation supports the request for a specific accommodation.
3. Whether the accommodation is reasonable and effective as mandated by the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
4. Whether the accommodation is of a personal nature (the University is not required to grant accommodations of a personal nature.)
5. Whether the student will be assured of participation in the particular program without the accommodation.
6. What alternative accommodations are available to provide the student with the same or similar content and/or level of instruction for the particular course.
7. Whether the accommodation will fundamentally alter the particular course, degree requirements, or other academic program as determined by the appropriate faculty member, department chair, Dean and University officials.\*
8. Whether a requested accommodation constitutes an undue burden to the University.

\*Faculty, department chairs, Deans and other University officials determine what constitutes adequate curriculum requirements, what courses are necessary to the degree requirements, and whether the nature and objectives of individual courses have been met.

#### **E. Accommodation Process**

Students seeking accommodations have a responsibility to contact TAS or IS to schedule an initial intake appointment. During this initial appointment, the student and the staff member will review documentation (which should be submitted in advance), and discuss the student's expressed needs and requests for accommodations. Students will be given the opportunity to have input regarding the type and extent of any accommodations provided.

After the intake process and a Request for Services form is completed by the student, the TAS Director or the IS Coordinator will make a determination regarding appropriate accommodations. If the request meets the criteria set forth in Section II. D, an ADA Accommodation Notification of Faculty and Staff form will be completed for each class in which the student is requesting accommodations. The student has the choice to have the Notification letter emailed to the faculty member, or to hand-deliver the letter, but the student must notify the staff of his/her decision. The student is encouraged to keep their copy in their personal records.

Prior to or at the beginning of each semester, the student will complete a Request for Services form. If the current accommodations need to be adjusted, the student will need to make an appointment with the TAS Director or the IS Coordinator. The student is responsible for obtaining and distributing the ADA Accommodation Notification of Faculty and Staff forms in a timely manner. Untimely requests for and/or distribution of these forms may result in a delay, substitution or denial of an accommodation.

#### **F. Requests for Modification of Academic Requirements**

A request for modification of academic requirements is an interactive process involving the student, TAS Director, faculty, staff and administration to outline accommodations and define alterations, if any, to academic programs of the University. In providing accommodations, neither the University nor the teaching faculty is required to *fundamentally* alter its courses, curriculum, degree requirements or program objectives.

Modifications to academic courses and/or requirements are approved only where it is demonstrated that the accommodations will not alter the program objectives or affect academic integrity. Such requests by the student must be submitted in writing to the faculty member or academic departments. TAS will discuss the matter with the student and appropriate University personnel (e.g. Dean, department chair, or faculty), who will issue a decision to the student.

## **G. Requests for Non-Academic Accommodations**

Students or other individuals with disabilities seeking to obtain accommodations unrelated to academic access from programs departments or other University affiliated organizations, may request accommodations for an upcoming event, activity, or other University sanctioned function. These students or individuals with disabilities may or may not be registered with TAS and IS. Upon request, TAS and IS will serve as a resource for determining whether, if, and how, the accommodation should be provided. Documentation of the individual's disability may be required to support the request for accommodation.

In the case of non-academic accommodations, TAS and IS will not assume the costs. In these cases, it is the financial responsibility of the sponsoring program, department or other University affiliated organization.

Requests for non-academic accommodations must be made to the responsible office, department or other university affiliated organization in a timely manner in order to provide the University sufficient time to evaluate the request and implement accommodations. Untimely requests may result in a delay, substitution, or denial of an accommodation.

## **III. TESTING AND ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES AND INTERPRETER SERVICES AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

### **A. Exam Accommodations**

The provision of accommodations for exams is an interactive process involving the student, the TAS Director or IS Coordinator, and faculty. If exam accommodations are to be provided through TAS or IS, the student should adhere to the following procedures:

1. All exams taken in the testing center should be scheduled by the student.
  - a. Exams can be scheduled in person at Fentem Hall Room 302 or online at <https://www.ecok.edu/current-students/student-services/office-testing-and-accessibility-services/exam-assistance-request>
  - b. To ensure there are no delays, exams should be scheduled 2 business hours in advance.
2. Students should check email to make sure that he/she has received a confirmation that the exam has been scheduled. If no confirmation has been received, please contact our office at 580-559-5297, [tas@ecok.edu](mailto:tas@ecok.edu), or in Fentem Hall Room 302.
3. Students will then come to Fentem Hall Room 302 on the scheduled date.

If exam accommodations are to be provided through the testing center, the faculty should adhere to the following procedures:

1. Faculty will receive notification of scheduled exam through email.
2. Faculty needs to approve the exam time and date as soon as possible.
3. All exams, or passwords, should be sent to [tas@ecok.edu](mailto:tas@ecok.edu) or Fentem Hall 302 prior to the exam. Please indicate any special instructions, as well as how the exam should be returned upon completion.

Exams should be administered at the regular exam time. With advance notice to the Accommodation Specialist and the approval from the faculty member, the day, time, and location of the exam may be changed. No early or late exams will be allowed without prior approval from the faculty member. Faculty approval will be needed to administer exams if a student arrives more than 15 minutes later than the originally scheduled time.

If a student misses an exam scheduled through the testing center, he/she needs to immediately contact the faculty member and the TAS Accommodation Specialist. If an exam is missed, it will be returned to the faculty member.

Students may be asked to provide ID before testing.

Phones or other electronic devices must be turned off and stored away, or given to the proctor while testing.

Any scratch paper or other outside materials used on exams must be left with the proctor. These will be returned to the instructor.

## **B. Note Taking Accommodations**

If note taking accommodations are to be provided through TAS, the student should adhere to the following procedures:

1. Identify the courses for which notes are being requested, and indicate how notes should be delivered. Notes can be either emailed to the student, or picked up in the TAS office.
2. If the student has not arrived to the class 15 minutes after the beginning of class, the note taker will leave for the day. If the class is not meeting, it is the student's responsibility to notify TAS that the note taker will not be needed that day.
3. If the student has chosen to pick up his/her notes, the student should come to TAS at least once a week to pick up notes. If a student does not pick up notes for two (2) consecutive weeks, the service will be discontinued.

4. Students should notify TAS when there is a problem with note taking services or in the event that services are no longer needed.

### **C. Accommodations for Alternative Format (Audiotape, E-Text, Braille, Etc)**

Students with disabilities, like all University students, are expected to purchase their own textbooks and course materials. Students with disabilities, however, will not be required to pay for the cost of converting books and written materials into alternative format. It is the student's responsibility to initiate requests for alternate format prior to the beginning of each semester. To the extent possible, TAS recommends eight (8) weeks advance notice to assure that the needed materials are converted.

When written materials (tests, handouts, etc.) from class require conversion to an alternate format, it is the instructor's responsibility to provide TAS with the material as far in advance as possible to ensure materials can be converted in the time needed. In cases where materials are provided at the last minute, TAS cannot guarantee conversion at the time requested.

Students need to complete the following steps before the process of converting materials into alternate format can begin:

1. Upon completion of class registration each semester, submit a Request for Alternate Format Material to the Accommodation Specialist. At this time, alternate format options, procedures, and reasonable expectation for receiving materials will be discussed. A signed agreement is generated at this meeting as to what is requested by the student and the procedures for providing the materials in alternate format.
2. Students are required to provide copies of classroom materials.
3. In the case of extenuating circumstances which prevent a student from following the aforementioned procedures, students should contact the TAS Accommodation Specialist to discuss other arrangements.

### **Important Information Regarding Alternate Format**

Since requests are filled on a first come, first served basis, late requests may result in a delay or substitution of the requested alternate format. **Testing and Accessibility Services reserves the right to deliver optional types of alternate format to students as necessary to provide access. In such cases, TAS will ensure that the format is accessible to the student. Students will be notified and involved in the process of deciding the best types of optional services.**

It is generally recommended that students make arrangements to pick up materials regularly. If alternate format is being provided in installments, TAS will make every effort to notify the student that it is available for pickup.

Students should notify the Accommodation Specialist immediately if there are any changes in the status of a request or if there are any problems with the alternate format materials. **The Accommodation Specialist should be notified immediately if some or all the readings for a course are no longer needed or if the course is dropped.** In the event a student makes a formal request for texts in an alternate format and doesn't pick up the materials requested by mid-term of the semester the request was made, future requests cannot be guaranteed.

### **Copyright Policy**

Copyrighted materials reproduced in an accessible format by TAS for an individual with a disability may not be copied, shared, distributed, or sold, except in accordance with the provisions of the copyright laws.

## **IV. Sign Language Interpreter**

### **Classroom Procedure**

The sign language interpreter is a paid professional employed by East Central University to facilitate communication between Deaf or hard of hearing students, instructors, hearing class members, or other persons requiring communication assistance. The interpreter's role in the classroom is defined by a set of ethical standards established by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and upheld by the Interpreter Services Program. The interpreter will sit or stand where the student can easily see the interpreter, instructor or board, and will faithfully communicate the lecture, discussion, demonstrations or announcements as accurately as possible. The interpreter will neither add to nor delete from any interaction which takes place in the classroom. She or he will never censor, but will interpret what is said and voice what the student signs. This will be done by using the simultaneous method (the message will be voiced/signed while the speaker/signer is expressing him/herself).

### **A. Interpreter's Responsibilities to the Student**

1. The Interpreter will exhibit professional behaviors following the RID Code of Ethics.
2. The interpreter will be punctual or early if possible for the assigned class.
3. The interpreter will faithfully and accurately communicate the information presented.
4. The interpreter will wait in the hallway for 10 minutes for a 50 minute class, 15 minutes for one hour and 15 minute class, and 30 minutes for a two to three hour class in the event that the student is late or absent.
5. After the designated wait times, the interpreter will return to the Interpreter's Office.

### **B. Student's Responsibilities**

1. Be an active learner and participate in your education.
2. Be on time to class. As a courtesy, if you will be absent or late, please inform the interpreter or the Program Coordinator. Please email to [mmccartney@ecok.edu](mailto:mmccartney@ecok.edu), or call 580.559.5765 V; or VP 199.181.88.140.



3. Please be respectful of the Interpreters and their professional roles.

## **V. PERSONAL AIDS AND EQUIPMENT**

Students with disabilities are permitted to use personal aids and specialized equipment, as long as the aid or equipment does not interfere with other students or the faculty member. Faculty members may work with students on alternative aids and equipment that might assist students in accessing academic materials. Problems related to the use of aids or equipment in the classroom should be referred to TAS or IS for resolution.

Students are responsible for providing their own personal devices or services, including, but not limited to the following: wheelchairs or wheelchair repair, personal transportation; computers and software for use at home; individually prescribed devices; prescription eyeglasses; hearing aids; readers for personal use; alternate format materials unrelated to academic courses; or services of a personal nature including assistance in eating, using the toilet, bathing, or dressing. As appropriate, TAS or IS will make referrals to agencies or organizations that may be available to assist students in fulfilling needs outside of the jurisdiction of TAS or IS.

### **A. Personal Care Attendants**

Attendants are authorized to accompany students with disabilities and to perform both personal and academic tasks for them, such as taking notes, scribing, and turning pages. These attendants should not, however, interfere with other students or the teaching faculty member. Problems that relate to personal attendant services should be referred to the Testing and Accessibility Services office.

### **B. Animals**

#### **Definitions:**

**Service Animal:** By law, a service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals. In some cases, ECU may permit miniature horses on campus on a case-by-case basis, consistent with applicable law. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Federal law does not require the individual to provide documentation that an animal has been trained as a service animal. The University may, however, ask if the animal is required because of a disability, as well as what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

Service animals will be permitted to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of campus. This includes university housing, classrooms, labs, and food service areas. Individual with service animals who do not need accommodations connected to their disability do not need to register with Testing and Accessibility Services, nor does the

individual need to request any accommodation to policies to have access to the service animal.

**Support/Comfort Animal:** A support animal is an animal that provides necessary emotional (or other) support to lessen the impact of one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Support animals are not required to be trained or perform work or tasks, and they include species other than dogs and miniature horses. Before a person can bring a comfort animal on campus, ECU Testing and Accessibility Services (Fentem Hall Room 304) will determine, on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, whether such animal is a reasonable accommodation on campus. An accommodation review process will be undertaken, and will require sufficient information and documentation that meets specific guidelines. Additional conversations between the ECU Testing and Accessibility Services and the requesting student may be necessary.

**Responsibilities of Individuals with Service Animals:** ECU is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service or emotional support animal. Owners are responsible for the care and feeding of animals. Emotional animals must comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including vaccination, licensure, animal health and leash laws. When outside of the individual's room, animals must be on a leash, harness or otherwise under control. A service animal shall be restrained with a harness, leash, or other tether, unless an individual's disability precludes the use of a restraint or if the restraint would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If a service animal is not tethered, it must be otherwise under the individual's control, whether by voice control, signals, or other effective means.

Service animals and Emotional support animals must also be housebroken. Individuals are responsible for ensuring the immediate clean-up and proper disposal of all animal waste. If you have questions about the proper disposal of waste material, contact Testing and Accessibility Services or Housing and Residence Life.

Although ECU will not charge any deposits or fees, owners are responsible for any damage to university property in the same manner the University imposes charges for damages in other cases. Owner will also be charged for any necessary extermination fees above standard pest management.

**Exceptions and Exclusions:** The University may exclude a service animal from campus if its behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or when its presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program or activity. Furthermore, the University may ask an individual with a disability to remove an animal from campus if the animal is out of control and the individual does not take effective action to control it; or if the animal is not housebroken.

## **VI. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Student Rights**

Students with disabilities cannot be denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under educational programs and activities in accordance with the ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and any applicable state laws. Students have a right to an individualized assessment of documentation; timely delivery of services consistent with the notice provided by the student; confidentiality; and prompt equitable investigation and resolution of complaints.

## **B. Student Responsibilities**

Students with disabilities have a responsibility to self-identify; self-advocate for individual needs; provide early notice of an accommodation request; adhere to the policy and procedures for accessing accommodations; and fully participate in the accommodation process.

## **VII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

### **A. Resolution of Grievances through the University Judicial System**

Claims of discrimination on the basis of disability, such as claims of differential treatment or harassment, are directed to and resolved by University grievance process (See ECU Student Handbook).

### **B. Resolution of Grievances through Formal Process**

Formal grievances related to the failure to provide reasonable accommodations may be initiated through the ADA/504 Compliance Officer who will attempt to achieve an informal resolution of the grievance. If an informal resolution cannot be achieved, the ADA/504 Compliance Officer will appoint an ad hoc Disability Grievance Committee to hear the case. Then the ADA/504 Compliance Officer will issue a formal ruling. If the grievance is against the Office of Testing and Accessibility Services, the ADA/504 Compliance Officer will issue a formal ruling unless it reverses the recommendation of the ad hoc Disability Grievance Committee. In this case, the grievance and recommendation of the ad hoc Disability Grievance Committee will be reviewed by the Dean of Students who will issue a formal ruling.

All written grievances should contain (1) a description of the nature of the complaint; (2) previous efforts at resolution; and (3) proposed remedy.

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