

## 1. PURPOSE

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic program or activity or in employment. The following outlines Sam Houston State University's compliance with TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) OF 1990, AS AMENDED IN THE ADA AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2008, AND SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

2.01 The term disability means with respect to an individual:

- a. A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities as listed in the ADA Amendments Act of 2008;
- b. A record of such an impairment (has a history of or has been classified as having a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities); or
- c. Being regarded as having such an impairment (has been subjected to an action prohibited under the ADA, as amended, because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity).

2.02 "Qualified person with a disability" means:

- a. With respect to postsecondary and vocational education, persons with disabilities who meet the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the institution's programs and activities.
- b. With respect to employment, persons with disabilities who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question.

2.03 Section 504 / ADA Coordinators

- a. The SHSU Section 504/ADA Coordinator for student academic-related matters is the Director of the SHSU Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), located in the Lee Drain Building Annex, SHSU Box

2091, Huntsville, Texas 77341, with telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu). SHSU and SSD promote full and equal access on the part of otherwise qualified students with disabilities to the educational and extra-curricular programs, activities, and services of the University. Students seeking academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services under Section 504 or the ADA should contact SSD. SSD makes the initial determinations regarding such requests.

- b. The SHSU Section 504/ADA Coordinator for employment-related matters is the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and Risk Management located in the Thomason Building, Suite 202, SHSU Box 2356, Huntsville, Texas 77341, with telephone 936-294-1070, and e-mail [employment@shsu.edu](mailto:employment@shsu.edu).
- c. The SHSU Section 504/ADA Coordinator for facilities-related matters is the Associate Vice President of Facilities Management, located in the Sam South Complex, 2424 Sam Houston Avenue, SHSU Box 2357, Huntsville, Texas 77341, with telephone 936-294-1910, and e-mail [facilitiesmanagement@shsu.edu](mailto:facilitiesmanagement@shsu.edu).

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE OF SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SSD)

- 3.01 The mission of the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is to promote full and equal access on the part of otherwise qualified students with disabilities to the educational and extra-curricular programs, activities, and services of the University.
- 3.02 Evaluate student requests for academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services and make initial determinations with regard to such requests. Pursuant to this responsibility, the SSD Director or his/her designee:
  - a. interviews the student with regard to his/her impairment(s) and request for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services;
  - b. reviews student's self-report and documentation with respect to his/her impairment to make an individualized assessment of necessary academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services; requests additional and/or updated documentation as necessary;

- c. develops an effective accommodation plan with the student, detailing the specific academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services for which he/she has been approved, if such accommodations are warranted by the student's documentation and self-report;
  - d. makes forms or letters reflective of the student's accommodation plan available to the student upon his/her request for use in academic courses; and
  - e. consults with the student and his/her instructor(s), as needed, regarding the effectiveness and implementation of academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- 3.03 Maintain the security and confidentiality of disability documentation and related information submitted by students applying for SSD services.
- SSD may release information to University faculty and staff regarding a student's disability, as it relates to his/her accommodations and educational needs, with the student's written consent.
- 3.04 Work with faculty to ensure that requested accommodations do not fundamentally or substantially alter essential course requirements, nor reduce the academic integrity of the course.
- 3.05 Receive disability-related grievance documents from students, in accordance with Section 6 of this policy, "Grievance Resolution Procedures."
4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY UNDER THE ADA, ADA, AND § 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973
- 4.01 Inform students of available SSD assistance by including information on the SSD Office in course syllabi. For example: "Any student with a disability that affects his/her academic performance should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to request accommodations."
  - 4.02 Refer all students who may informally request disability accommodations to this policy and refer these students to SSD for registration and to request services as described in section 3 above.
  - 4.03 Review SHSU SSD disability accommodation forms or letters presented by students.

- 4.04 Implement and/or facilitate SSD recommended accommodations or services.
- 4.05 When a recommended accommodation or service would, in the instructor's opinion, result in a fundamental or substantial alteration of essential course requirements, the faculty member will engage in an interactive process with the SSD office and the student to identify and implement an appropriate alternative solution to ensure the qualified person with a disability has the opportunity to reach the same level of achievement in the course as other students. When consensus cannot be reached, a faculty member may recommend or the student may request a course substitution.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- 5.01 Meet the academic and technical standards for participation in the University's educational programs, activities, and services.
- 5.02 Follow policies and procedures of SSD as outlined in this policy and more fully detailed on their website (<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>) and available in hard copy at the SSD Office. Specifically, students seeking assistance must:
  - a. Register with SSD as described in the Procedures to Request Services;
  - b. Submit documentation of impairment(s) consistent with the General Documentation Guidelines;
  - c. Upon receiving SSD approval of academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services, request accommodation forms or letters from SSD for academic courses;
  - d. Submit accommodation forms to instructors in a timely manner and, if necessary, engage in dialogue regarding the implementation of accommodations and services;
  - e. Apprise SSD in a timely manner of any concerns with the implementation of academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services;
  - f. Notify SSD in a timely manner of any changes in mental and/or physical condition warranting different or additional accommodations and/or services and submit documentation supporting such need; and

g. Notify SSD in a timely manner of the need for approved auxiliary aids and services, such as sign language interpreting or captioning services, alternative textbook formats, and adaptive technologies. Failure to provide timely notification may result in delays in the receipt of such aids and services.

5.03 Students may apply for an academic course substitution on the basis of a disability through consultation with SSD and the Course Substitution Procedure.

## 6. GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

6.01 Students are encouraged to informally resolve their concerns directly before proceeding to the formal grievance phase.

6.02 It is the policy of Sam Houston State University not to discriminate or retaliate against any student who has filed a disability-related grievance or who has assisted or participated in the investigation of such a grievance.

6.03 Upon a student's request, SSD will provide the student with administrator contact information and reasonable accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services that he/she may require participating in the grievance process. Such accommodations and services may include, but are not limited to, sign language interpreting or captioning services and information in alternative formats.

6.04 Except when prohibited by a student's impairment, all grievance, appeal notices and decisions shall be in writing and addressed to the appropriate authorities provided herein with a copy to the SSD Director. When appropriate for the impairment, other accessible means (e.g., audio recording, digital text, etc.) will be substituted for the writing requirement.

6.05 Disability-related grievances or discrimination complaints and appeals of grievance decisions should be addressed to the appropriate reviewing authorities in the order listed below:

a. For academic program decisions:

- (1) Grieving Authority is the Department Chair;
- (2) Appellate Authority is the College Dean or his or her designee;
- (3) Final Appellate Authority is the Provost or his or her designee.

- b. For decisions of the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) regarding requests for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services:
  - (1) Grieving Authority is the Executive Director for Counseling and Health Services;
  - (2) Appellate Authority is the Vice President for Student Affairs. The decision of the Vice President for Student Affairs is final for grievances relating to SSD.
- c. For accessibility of a facility, organization, activity, event, or service of the University:
  - (1) Grieving Authority is the Building Liaison, Program Director/Coordinator, or Event Organizer;
  - (2) Appellate Authority is Vice President in whose division the grievance arose. The decision of the Vice President reviewing the appeal is final for accessibility grievances.

#### 6.06 Grievance

- a. Within fifteen (15) working days of an accommodation decision or an alleged disability-related discrimination, the student must notify the appropriate Grieving Authority with a copy to the SSD Director.
- b. The elements of the written grievance shall include, at a minimum: the student's name, student ID number, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone/telecommunication number; the facts and circumstances of the complaint; a description of how the student attempted to resolve the grievance informally (if such an attempt was made) and the remedy or resolution sought by the student.
- c. The Grievance Authority will:
  - (1) review all documentation pertaining to the appeal or complaint; and
  - (2) request additional information from relevant parties as deemed necessary;

- (3) interview the student in person or by other accessible means (e.g., telephone/telecommunication service, in the case of a distance learner) as well as the alleged discriminating party or identified witnesses; and
- (4) notify the student, the SSD Director, and any other parties to the grievance of their decision within five (5) working days of receiving the appeal or complaint.

#### 6.07 Appeal

- a. The student may appeal the finding of the Grievance Authority by notifying the appropriate Appellate Authority with a copy to the SSD Director within fifteen (15) working days of receiving notice of the Grievance Authority's decision.
- b. The Appellate Authority will:
  - (1) review all documentation pertaining to the appeal or complaint, including the decision of the Grievance Authority;
  - (2) request additional information from the student, the SSD Director, the Executive Director, and any other parties to the grievance, as necessary;
  - (3) interview the student in person or by other accessible means (e.g., telephone/telecommunication service, in the case of a distance learner). Appellate Authority has the option to interview the alleged discriminating party or witnesses;
  - (4) within five (5) working days of receipt of the appeal, provide a written decision to the student, the SSD Director, the Executive Director, and any other parties to the grievance; and
  - (5) take any additional steps necessary to implement his/her decision.

#### 6.08 Final Appeal

- a. Grievance appeal decisions of a College Dean on a matter relating to an academic program may be appealed to the Provost whose decision is final.

