



# Students with Disabilities Navigating Their Way Through a Postsecondary Setting

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# Providing Services to all Eligible Students



# Legal Responsibilities of Postsecondary Institutions

- Legal obligation to ensure campus and related activities are accessible:
  - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
  - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)
  - ADAAA 2008
- US Department of Education:
  - Dear Colleague Letter
- Case law & OCR ruling.

# Understanding Postsecondary Institution's Responsibility

- What does this all mean?
  - Higher education required to provide access to programs and activities by providing reasonable accommodations to:
    - Qualified individuals with disabilities
    - Have a documented disability
- How does an institution do this?
  - Through collaboration between Disability Support Services (DSS), faculty, departments, programs and individuals with disabilities.

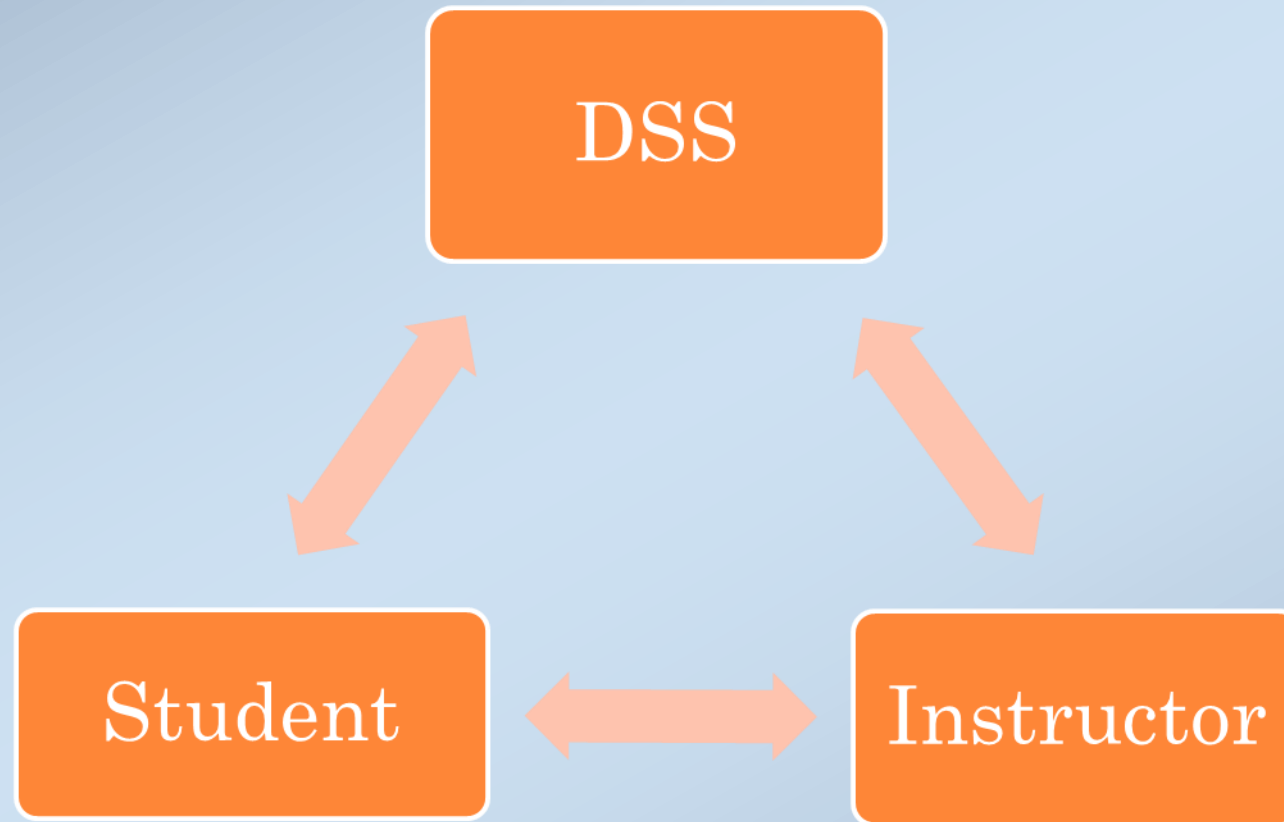
# Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

- Release of information to a third party is permitted only:
  - With the student's written permission.
  - When parent(s)/guardian present a copy of the immediately preceding year's tax return.
  - The student comes into the office with parent(s)/guardian.
  - A lawfully issued subpoena is issued to the office of responsibility at the university.

# Responsibilities of Parents

- **Parents are not obligated to be involved with DSS and faculty.**
- **Parents may assist** by gathering documentation but **student** is responsible for following through with requests for accommodations from DSS and faculty.
- **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) prevents DSS and faculty from freely sharing information with parents of the student.**
  - **Exceptions - See previous slide on FERPA.**

# Collaborative Relationship



# Student Roles

- Self-identify to DSS (encourage referrals from faculty).
- Submit documentation to DSS.
- Complete application process with DSS.
- Follow accommodation process – i.e. meeting with instructor.
- Request accommodations from instructor –
  - If student makes requests without a DSS accommodation memo, instructor may refer them to DSS.
- Request accommodations in a timely manner.
- Communicate with DSS and faculty as needed.

# DSS Roles

- Student self-identifies and provides documentation to DSS.
- DSS reviews and determines appropriateness of documentation.
- DSS:
  - Conducts an intake interview with student
  - Determines reasonable accommodations
  - Discusses DSS policies and procedures
  - Generates accommodation memo and contract
- DSS implements accommodations, e.g. proctoring, captioning.
- Other – Provisionary, temporary services.



# DSS Services

- A variety of services\* are offered, but are not limited to:
  - Note taking
  - Test proctoring arrangements
  - Assistive technology equipment, lab and services
  - Interpreter & captioning services
  - Lab and library assistance
  - Assistance with Housing accommodations
  - Emotional support animals, service animals
  - Adaptive sports equipment

# Faculty Roles

- Respond to accommodation memos and student requests:
  - Meet with and discuss all accommodations with students
    - For online courses, may discuss by phone, email, Skype, etc.
- Provide access to classroom and activities:
  - Course materials, to include online and print media
  - Work with interpreters and captioning providers
  - In a timely manner

# Faculty Roles

- Provide a syllabus statement regarding accommodations.
- Communicate with DSS and student as needed.
- Refer students to DSS.
- Maintain confidentiality.

# Suggestions for Contacting DSS

- Start **EARLY** with the documentation process - starting 6 months to one year early is feasible.
- Contact DSS office (**preferably student**) for documentation criteria.
- Send documentation directly to DSS and provide name, number and email for follow-up contact.
- If **student** does not hear from DSS, call, write, visit, or e-mail DSS.
- If documentation acceptable, **student** and DSS set up an appointment (if unacceptable find out your options – sometimes an addendum is all that is needed).

# Working with DSS, VR and Campus

- **Student** needs to follow DSS policies and procedures and avail him/herself of all recommended accommodations.
- Have Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) be a part of the process.
- **Student needs to be involved.**
- **Student** needs to **understand his/her disability** and what are considered “**reasonable**” and “**appropriate**” accommodations.
- Seek out other support services, such as tutoring centers.
- Communicate with instructors.

# Resources

- Learning Disabilities Association of Alabama (LDA-Alabama)
  - <http://ldaalabama.org/>
- UAB Disability Support Services Handbook
  - <http://www.uab.edu/students/disability/images/Documents/dss-student-handbook.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education, Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your rights and Responsibilities (revised 2011)
  - <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>
- National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
  - <http://www.ncset.org/websites/postsecondary.asp>
- HEATH Resource Center
  - <https://www.heath.gwu.edu/links>

# Helping Each Other, Working Together



# Contact Information

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