

# Disability Support Services Handbook

Valparaiso University  
Valparaiso, Indiana

Disability Support Service Office  
464-6956

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## **A Message from the President**

At Valparaiso University, we are committed not only to excellence in teaching, but also to living our Institution's ideals in the Lutheran tradition, one committed to scholarship, freedom and faith. Part of living this tradition includes the dedication to providing access to people with disabilities and to ensuring they have the same educational opportunities and learning experiences as any other student on campus.

Using the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a guide, Valparaiso University is committed to providing a diverse and inclusive learning environment that welcomes persons with disabilities and views them as unique and essential members of our campus. The ADA is an historic civil rights act, mandating that universities make their facilities, programs, activities, and environment as accessible as possible to people with disabilities. At Valparaiso University, the Office of Disability Support Services provides guidance and support on behalf of students with disabilities and our faculty and staff fully support their efforts.

This Handbook contains important information about Valparaiso University's commitment to people with disabilities. In it you will find descriptions, policies, procedures and additional resources that provide clarity about many of the issues and challenges facing people with disabilities in the University setting. We want to ensure that all members of our academic community (students, staff and faculty) recognize the special challenges facing people with disabilities and accommodate their needs as appropriate.

Our goal at the University is to ensure that all members of our university community feel welcome and able to fully contribute as part of campus, including those individuals who happen to live with a disability. In seeking to acknowledge and understand the unique challenges and obstacles faced by people with disabilities, Valparaiso University will not only help to maximize the contributions of this unique segment of our population, but will truly embody its Lutheran values.

Please join me in building a community at Valparaiso University that values diversity and goes well beyond legal requirements to provide fair and equitable opportunities to all.

Mark A. Heckler  
President

## **DSS Mission Statement**

The mission of the office of Disability Support Services at Valparaiso University is to enable students with disabilities with equal access to an education and to university life by providing accommodations and coordinating support services and programs toward their success. Valparaiso University and its faculty have a legal responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations for students who have been diagnosed with a disability, but are otherwise qualified for the course or degree program. Program policies and procedures are designed to provide students with as much independence as possible, preserve confidentiality, promote student responsibility and empowerment, and support students and faculty with finding individualized solutions to educational obstacles.

## **Nondiscrimination Policy Statement for Valparaiso University**

As part of its mission for its students, Valparaiso University has developed the following nondiscrimination policy which identifies its intention to provide a safe and tolerant environment for all, including those with disabilities. The policy reflects the University's obligations to the U.S. Department of Education. This policy was approved by the Board and put into effect on Oct. 27, 2007.

Nondiscrimination Policy as to Students. Valparaiso University admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or (as qualified herein) religion, to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities, generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or (as qualified herein) religion in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, career services and placement, and athletic and other school-administered programs. Valparaiso University is an institution committed to its Lutheran traditions. The University reserves the right to promote the teachings of the church and to exercise preferences in admissions in favor of Lutherans.

## SECTION I: LEGAL ISSUES

### A. Americans with Disabilities Act

1. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. There are four sections of the law: employment, government, public accommodation, 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 that prevent qualified individuals with disabilities from enjoying the same opportunities available to a person without disabilities.
2. A student requesting accommodations should:
  - have a disability covered by the law;
  - be qualified with or without a reasonable accommodation;
  - identify himself or herself as having a covered liability; and
  - request an accommodation
3. The institution is obligated to provide only reasonable accommodations; fundamental alterations to college programs are not required.
4. The specific obligations of postsecondary institutions, with regard to students with disabilities, include but are not limited to:
  - All programs and activities must be offered in the most integrated setting appropriate
  - Academic requirements must be modified, on a case-by-case basis, to afford qualified students with disabilities and applicants an equal educational opportunity
  - A professor may not impose upon students with disabilities rules that have the effect of limiting their participation in the educational activities; for example, prohibiting tape recorders or service dogs in the classroom
  - Accommodations must be provided in a timely manner

### B. ADA Definition of a Disability

A person with a disability is any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and has a medical record of such impairment.

### C. Definition of a Reasonable Accommodation

1. The word “accommodation” is many times misunderstood in relation to its application to students with disabilities. Accommodation provides a method whereby a student with a disability can demonstrate his or her knowledge

- and abilities when traditional methods are inadequate. An accommodation in no way implies giving someone an unfair advantage over other students.
2. The ADA goes on to describe that accommodations must be “reasonable.”
  3. Three kinds of accommodations are *not* considered reasonable:
    - It is not a reasonable accommodation if making the accommodation or allowing participation poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others
    - It is not a reasonable accommodation if making the accommodation means making a substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum or a substantial alteration in the manner in which services are provided
    - It is not a reasonable accommodation if it poses an undue financial or administrative burden
  4. Students with disabilities are required to meet the same academic standards as other students. Students with disabilities are not allowed to use their disability as an excuse to complete substandard work.

#### **D. Secondary vs. Postsecondary Disabilities Services**

It is important for university faculty and staff to realize that requirements for postsecondary institutions in regards to disabilities vary greatly from secondary institutions. In high schools, the law which guided the school’s responsibilities is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). By this law, the school provided certain non-academic services and structured a large part of the student’s weekly schedule. The school was required to modify education programs, prepare Individual Education Programs (IEPs) provide a free, appropriate public education, and provide remediation and appropriate related services such as physical therapy. At the postsecondary level, students are considered adults and must act as their own advocates. This transition may be difficult for some parents and students. The request for support services or accommodation of disabilities at the postsecondary level must come from the person requesting the services and not at the request of a third party, such as a parent or guardian. (See Appendix A for more specific differences between secondary and postsecondary disability services)

#### **E. Responsibilities**

1. Postsecondary institutions:
  - are required to provide accommodations as directed by the ADA
  - are *not* required to reduce or waive any of the essential requirements of a course or program

- are *not* required to conduct assessment of learning, psychological, or medical disabilities
  - are *not* required to provide personal attendants
  - are *not* required to provide personal or private tutors, unless these services are available to students without disabilities
2. DSS students have a responsibility to:
- self-identify or disclose their disability to the DSS office
  - obtain assessment results and provide them to the DSS office
  - act as independent adults
  - arrange their own weekly schedules
  - arrange for their own personal attendants or designated assistive technologies, as needed
  - communicate regularly with their professors regarding accommodations
  - complete the curriculum required for each class
  - follow policies and guidelines of Valparaiso University
3. Faculty members are required to:
- provide accommodations requested by DSS students
  - maintain confidentiality regarding students with disabilities and their accommodations
  - discuss accommodations when approached by students with disabilities
  - communicate with the DSS office when questions arise regarding accommodations or when students with disabilities are failing in spite of accommodations
  - report excessive absences to the DS office as well as the Dean's office of the appropriate college
  - provide a statement in each of their course syllabi alerting students of their right to accommodations through the DSS office if they have a disability. Here is an example of a DSS statement for the syllabus:  
 “Students with a documented disability who feel they might need academic accommodations are encouraged to contact the office of Disability Support Services. You can contact Dr. Sherry DeMik, DSS Director, through the administrative assistant of Disability Support Services, Paula Katsahnias at 464-6956.

## **F. Confidentiality**

Information regarding a disability is considered highly confidential, is maintained in separate, locked, secure files in the DSS office with limited access, and is shared on a need-to-know basis, such as a faculty needing the information to make necessary adjustments in teaching style. Generally, faculty

members need only to know that the appropriate documentation is in place that provides justification for the recommended accommodations. Faculty may ask the students directly about their disability and their need for accommodations. It is the student's prerogative to disclose more specific information. Some students are comfortable discussing their disability; some are not. Such conversations must be held in private to protect the student's confidentiality. If the student opens this conversation in front of others, he has chosen not to maintain confidentiality. Information about a student's disability should not be discussed with anyone without the student's permission; this includes fellow faculty members. Following the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), faculty members can only discuss the student's academic activities with parents if the student has signed the permission form in the Registrar's Office.

## **SECTION II: DISABILITIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

### **A. Descriptions of Disabilities**

1. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): generally characterized by an inability to pay close attention to detail, difficulty sustaining attention, forgetfulness in daily activities, impulsive behavior, disorganization, and other related symptoms. This student requires a need for structure and support with organization and focus.
2. Learning Disabilities (LD): best described as an inability to acquire or relate specific information. It can exist in one or more academic areas: reading, written language, or math. Students with LD often have difficulty with metacognition and cognitive strategies
3. Communication Disorders: student has difficulty processing receptive language or using expressive language effectively. This student often has difficulty following directions or making oral presentations.
4. Asperger syndrome/Autism Spectrum Disorder: student has difficulties in social and communication skills. These students are often intelligent, but are uncomfortable in social settings; they prefer working independently rather than in groups. They are often uncomfortable communicating with professors and other university personnel, and even sometimes with their peers. They also sometimes have sensory issues or become fixated on a topic, talking excessively about that topic, and sometimes avoid eye contact with others.
5. Psychological Disorders: some types of psychological disorders include depression, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, bipolar disorders, and

obsessive-compulsive disorders. Each psychological disorder varies in degree and intensity. The social stigma associated with psychological disorders may be the greatest obstacle to overcome. Confidentiality is vital with this type of disorder. Anxiety resulting from this disorder can cause test-taking problems.

6. Blindness or Visual Impairments: students will have varying degrees of visual impairment, which will determine the type of accommodations needed. Instructors who have students with a visual impairment or blindness should be conscious of teaching style needed to support the student's success, such as use of auditory cues and explaining diagrams and other visuals used for demonstration.
7. Deafness or Hearing Impairments: students will have varying degrees of hearing impairment, which will determine the type of accommodations needed. Some may need an interpreter while others can read lips. Instructors may want to learn a few signs to help these students function in the classroom. Teachers should also be aware that these students might not have developed strong language skills. These students will need visual cues from the instructor and might need help with obtaining notes from auditory lectures.
8. Chronic Medical Conditions: refers to any of a number of health-related conditions that may affect the respiratory, neurological, circulatory, or immune system of the body. The symptoms of these conditions are unstable and unpredictable and may be episodic. Symptoms of these conditions may affect energy level, attention, mobility, concentration, and a variety of other characteristics related to academic study. Side effects of the medications used for these conditions often cause the most severe symptoms. Some examples in this category are diabetes, recurrent cancer, autoimmune disorders such as lupus or rheumatoid arthritis, respiratory conditions, AIDS, blood disorders, Lyme's disease, Crohn's disease, seizure disorders, epilepsy, sickle cell anemia, or cardiac disorders.
9. Neurological Impairments: a disorder of the body's nervous system. Structural, biochemical, or electrical abnormalities in the brain, spinal cord, or in the nerves leading to or from them, can result in symptoms such as paralysis, muscle weakness, poor coordination, loss of sensation, seizures, confusion, pain, and altered levels of consciousness. Some such disorders are multiple muscular dystrophy, or cerebral palsy.
10. Orthopedic Impairments: composed of various mobility types, such as spinal cord injuries, arthritis, amputated limbs, or joint disorders. Many of these students use orthotic, prosthetic, or mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, canes, walkers, or segways. Service dogs are also used as an aid. It

is important that these students are given ample room for any adaptive equipment they may need to bring to class and to modify the environment as needed. There may also be a need to find an alternate classroom for instruction in order to provide accessibility for students in a wheelchair.

11. Traumatic Brain Injuries: Traumatic brain injury usually results from a violent blow or jolt to the head that causes the brain to collide with the inside of the skull. Some signs and symptoms of TBI are: Memory or concentration problems, slurred speech, headaches, dizziness or loss of balance, nausea or vomiting, mood swings, feeling depressed or anxious, or fatigue or drowsiness. Accommodations will vary based on the severity of the TBI and its symptoms.

## **B. Descriptions of Commonly-Requested Accommodations**

1. Extended time for completion of tests/quizzes: the student is usually given time and a half, but may receive double time if the disability is considered to be more severe. Please understand that the law has been clarified regarding extended time. *Whatever the amount of time that is allowed for test completion for the rest of the students in the class, no matter the reason given, the DSS student is to be given the extended time beyond that. If the rest of the class is given two whole hours, even though the test is a one-hour test, the DSS student must be given three hours to complete it.* This has been misunderstood by many, because the law was not always especially clear on its interpretation. The US Department of Education has recently made this distinction to help us understand the meaning of this accommodation.
2. Alternate location or distraction-reduced environment for test completion: Some students with disabilities may be distracted while taking a test in the classroom or may need to talk out loud to help him process the information and may need to take the test in a different room. The professor should talk with the student to determine the alternate location for taking the test. It can be in a different room in the same building as the classroom or in a different building like the library. Some students request to take the test in DSS office; in this case, the test taking is monitored by DSS personnel. If the student will be taking the test in the DSS office, contact the DSS director or the administrative assistant to arrange transporting of the test to the DSS office. This can be done in several ways: some professors send the test in a sealed envelope with the student; some professors send the test to me by email attachment; some prefer to drop off the test at the DSS office personally or to have us come and pick up the test from the professor's office. We are happy to do whichever way feels most comfortable for you. It often depends on how much you trust the DSS student. Once the test is completed,

the test will be placed in a sealed envelope and taken to the professor's office and slid under the door, or put in the professor's box in the department office, depending on the professor. *We are not comfortable putting tests in the campus mail.*

3. Notetaking support: Some students having trouble processing information at the same time as they take notes. These students benefit from having the option of getting copies of the notes taken by a peer (this should be facilitated by the professor) or getting notes from the professor. Many students greatly benefit from receiving the notes for class *before the class begins*. This helps give them a guide to follow during the lecture, on which they can write a few shorter notes but can mostly concentrate on the lecture. Some students achieve this support by tape recording the lectures and listen to the tapes later.
4. Extra time to complete assignments: this should always be arranged between the professor and the student early. It generally, but not always, applies to lengthy writing assignments.
5. Reader: students with a reading disability might need tests/quizzes read for them.
6. Scribe: students with a writing disability or a visual or physical disability or paralysis might need someone to record their responses on a test or an in-class assignment.
7. Assistive technology: there are various types of assistive technology available for use by students with sensory, communication, physical, or learning disabilities. These will be described to the professors involved as the need arises. One thing to know: VU has several computers in the Christopher Center which utilize a screen reader called Window Eyes and a scanner program called Open Book Ruby, which can be helpful to those with visual impairments or with reading disabilities. These are available for use by all students, not just those in DSS.
8. Transportation: Students with mobility issues might occasionally need transportation to and from classes, especially in the event of bad weather. This can be arranged with the VUPD, who have a van with wheelchair accessibility.
9. Priority registration: students with disabilities are identified by the Registrar's office and given priority registration. Many DSS students have specific needs regarding timing of class as they complete their schedules, so this affords them the opportunity to have more control over their schedules.
10. Handicap Parking Sticker: students needing a handicap parking sticker for parking their car on campus should contact the VUPD to make this

arrangement. Documentation of the need for the special sticker will need to be provided.

### **C. Chart of Disabilities and Possible Accommodation**

A chart can be found in Appendix B which identifies the characteristics of each type of disability described in Part A of this section and the accommodations typically requested for each type of disability.

## **SECTION III: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT VU**

### **A. VU Admission Criteria**

Students with disabilities are required to go through the admissions process the same as any other student applying at VU; they cannot request special treatment based on having a disability. Once admitted to VU, they can contact the DSS office to discuss accommodations.

### **B. Requirements when Requesting DSS Services**

Students are required to obtain and provide documentation verifying they have a disability that limits their academic success. The specific documentation required is described below. Disability documentation must be prepared by a licensed health care professional, and identify the nature and functional impact of the impairment. Students should also identify the accommodations received in previous educational settings.

### **C. Step-by-Step Process for Initiation of DSS Services**

#### **1. Self-identification**

- Students are required to self-identify their disability and need for accommodations by making contact with the DSS office; DSS personnel will not seek out students with disabilities. Students may self-identify at any point during the semester.
- Students often first contact and sometimes meet with the director of DSS during the spring of their senior year of high school.
- Students might approach their professor about having learning problems; the professor should suggest that the student contact the director of DSS to discuss possible accommodations. The professor can alert the DSS director about the student, but the student must self-identify to officially begin the DSS process.

#### **2. Determination of eligibility for services**

The DSS director is responsible for determining student eligibility for academic adjustments and services. Eligibility decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and take into consideration disability documentation, student self-report, and history of academic adjustments and services. The DSS Director will evaluate and determine eligibility in a timely manner.

3. Documentation requirements

Documentation requirements vary for different disabilities. The DSS office has developed the following requirements for documentation to be used for evaluating eligibility. If documentation does not meet these requirements, the student may be required to obtain additional documentation, or may be turned down for receiving accommodations.

- **Physical, Medical, or Psychological Disabilities**

- a. An appropriate agency or certified professional capable of diagnosing the disability in question should provide documentation. If the person signing the verification is not a certified professional, the documentation should state that it was based on a review of records prepared by an appropriate qualified professional or appropriate agency who performed the diagnosis.
- b. The documentation should be printed on agency, office, or company letterhead, listing the name, office address, and credentials of the qualified professional who performed the diagnosis and/or the name of the appropriate agency.
- c. Documentation should include a diagnostic statement, which describes the current functional limitations caused by the disability.
- d. If applicable, a description of treatments, medications, assistive devices/services in current use, and the estimated effectiveness in ameliorating the impact of the disability. Significant side effects that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral, or cognitive performance should also be noted.
- e. A description of the expected progression or stability of the impact of the disability over time should be included. This will provide a relevant timeframe for reevaluation of the student's needs. Expenses incurred in the reevaluation are the student's responsibility.
- f. Academic accommodations recommended, i.e.; additional testing time, auxiliary aids, etc.

- **Learning Disabilities**

- a. Qualified evaluator: The documentation should list the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator. The evaluator should have the professional training to make a diagnosis regarding the

specific learning disability. Documentation should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and otherwise legible.

- b. Currency of documentation: Documentation diagnosing a learning disability must be less than three years old.
  - c. Substantiation of learning disability: Documentation should include a comprehensive assessment battery. The resulting diagnostic report should include a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, information processing, and a diagnosis.
  - d. Rationale for accommodation: Specific evidence to establish a rationale supporting the need for accommodation and recommended accommodations.
- **Temporary Disabilities**

Students sometimes have surgery or an accident which causes them to have difficulty with mobility or use of their hands for an extended period of time but not permanently. Although the ADA does not cover support for students with temporary disabilities, the DSS office often assists in supporting the student with classroom accommodations. The student should first contact the VU Student Health Center to report the student's condition. He/she should provide thorough documentation of the temporary disability, such as that described above for physical disabilities, and a timeframe for the need for accommodations and for the reevaluation of the student's condition. If accommodations are determined to be necessary, the student's professors will be contacted. If transportation around campus will be needed, the student should make the arrangements with the VUPD.
4. Interview with director of DSS
    - Director of DSS meets with student to discuss disability and functional limitations, and accommodations being requested
    - Accommodations letter is drafted to be sent to professors
    - Forms are completed by student
  5. Forms required to be completed by student (examples found in Appendix):
    - Student completes form with contact information (Appendix C)
    - Student writes a letter in which he/she formally requests DSS services
    - Student signs form giving permission to communicate with VU personnel about accommodations (Appendix D)
  6. Accommodations information is sent to professors

#### **D. Informing VU Personnel of DSS Accommodations**

Once the student has been identified as having a documented disability and accommodations have been determined, an accommodations letter is developed for that student. The student's accommodation information is placed in Datatel. At the beginning of each semester, the professors will find a column on their class roster that is called "Accommodations". A link will appear in the Accommodations column on the class roster for each DSS student in the professor's class. The professor can select the link to view the accommodations approved for that student by the DSS office. The link will remain on the class roster for the entire semester. If a student requests accommodations later in the semester, an email will be sent to each of the student's professors alerting them to check their class roster for the student's newly-identified accommodations. If a professor is told by a student that he/she has a disability but there is no link on the class roster, the professor should contact the DSS office to determine if the student has been identified through the DSS process.

#### **E. Emergency Evacuation Process for VU Students with Disabilities**

The following is the Emergency Evacuation Plan for students with disabilities established by a VU committee:

Valparaiso University strives to protect the safety of its students, employees, and visitors with disabilities. This includes the safety of those people who are unable to evacuate a building on campus in the event of an emergency or to receive notice of that emergency because of their disability (whether permanent or temporary). Such disabilities usually include those related to physical mobility, vision, or hearing. In certain situations, they may also include mental disabilities that trigger severe anxiety in an emergency evacuation situation. This policy and process is primarily directed towards anyone who will be on campus for a long-term period of time and has a disability that will interfere with their ability to evacuate a building on campus in the event of an emergency or prevent them from receiving notice of that emergency.

The University uses various means to alert people of an emergency that requires evacuation of a building. The most common is a fire alarm, which, when activated, shuts off the building's elevators. Other means may be text messaging, e-mail, or the internet. These means will change as technology progresses. Upon the request of students or employees with a hearing disability, the University will equip a dorm room or office with a device or devices designed to alert the hearing impaired of an emergency.

A person with a disability who thinks they might be unable to evacuate a building in the event of an emergency must have a working cell phone on them at all times. Upon request, the University will supply a limited use cell phone to such disabled students and employees who do not have one. In the event of an emergency evacuation, if possible, consult the building's posted emergency evacuation map and move to the nearest location of safety. Use your cell phone and contact the Valparaiso University Police directly at 219-464-5430. If you call 911 from a cell phone, your call will be directed through the county then redirected to the VUPD and slow down your evacuation process. Announce your exact location and remain in place. A VUPD officer, officers, or other emergency personnel will arrive as soon as possible to aid in your evacuation. In the event you evacuate with the help of others in the interim, call the VUPD back to inform them that you no longer need assistance.

In order to assure you are covered by this policy and process, you must notify the proper person on campus and apprise them of your disability and need for any aid in or notification of an emergency evacuation. It would be preferable if this were done before you arrive on campus. Students or potential students must notify Disability Support Services and the Residential Life Office (if residing on campus). Employees must notify the Human Resource Office. Long term visitors must notify the person in charge of orchestrating their visit on campus. Those contacts will further educate you on this policy and process and make sure you are adequately prepared in the event you encounter an emergency evacuation while you are on campus.

Approved by VU President's Council on April 25, 2011.

## **F. Complaint and Grievance Procedures**

1. Complaints regarding discrimination: From the *Student Guide to University Life* "Student Academic Fair Practices" (found in Appendix G):

Valparaiso University is a scholarly community whose aim is to create an environment for humane learning. Toward this end, students and faculty, working together in close relationship, pursue not only knowledge but wisdom. In their mutual devotion to intellectual discovery, each stimulates the other. The prerequisite for the continuing success of this endeavor is academic freedom – the freedom to teach and to learn. As full members of the college community, therefore, students, like faculty, are encouraged to develop their capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for the truth. The rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of students [outlined in the SAFP] are essential for the realization of this goal.

Students who feel they are being discriminated against and denied the environment described above have the right to follow the grievance procedures identified in Appendix G of the *Student Guide to University Life*.

2. DSS Complaints: The Office of Disability Support Services at VU recognizes that there may be times when a student with a disability does not feel that he or she is fairly receiving the requested accommodations or a faculty member does not feel that the student is being responsible in the use of the classroom accommodations. Faculty and students with disabilities are encouraged to communicate closely with office of Disability Support Services regarding accommodations. When concerns arise, please follow the following steps toward resolution of the problem, moving to the next step only if satisfaction is not achieved (these steps would apply to either an instructor or a DSS student who has a serious complaint about an infraction regarding accommodations):

- Discuss the problem with the course instructor or student involved to determine the root of the problem.
- Contact the Director of Disability Support Services to determine the exact interpretation of the accommodations and determine if whether the accommodation is being handled effectively.
- Contact the Dean of the appropriate college to determine if an agreement can be achieved.
- Contact the Vice President and Legal Counsel to determine the legal implications of the problem.
- Contact the Associate Provost, supervisor of DSS, to report and discuss the problem.
- If you still feel your needs are not being met, you have the right to contact the Office of Civil Rights using the contact information in the “Tips and Resources” section of this handbook.

## SECTION IV: TIPS AND RESOURCES

### A. Additional Services for Students with Disabilities on Campus

#### ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER:

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides **referral service** to help connect students with appropriate resources on campus to support their academic achievement. Academic advisers, faculty and support staff may refer students to visit the ASC website, or call, email or stop by the ASC to get information about help sessions, peer tutoring and other types of academic support. The ASC aims to support students' personal and academic development at Valpo by connecting them with opportunities to enhance their learning, boost their performance and develop new study skills.

In addition to referral services, the ASC functions as a **coordination site** for programs that bring together resources from across the university to provide students with additional learning opportunities. In particular, one ASC program is **Supplemental Instruction**, which provides three weekly peer-led review sessions for BIO 151/152, BIO 171/172, and CHEM 111/121/122. Another is the **Peer Tutoring Program**, which is a student-tutor match program that provides individual and small group learning assistance for students seeking help in a particular course or in general English language skills (for ESL students).

Based on the recommendations of faculty members and other qualifications, the ASC recruits top students for paid tutor positions and provides training and supervision throughout the fall and spring semesters. Any student enrolled in an undergraduate course may apply to be matched with a tutor by completing a Peer Tutor Request form on the ASC website. Before applying for the program, students are expected to talk to their professor and attend any available first-level academic support services, such as professor office hours, department help sessions, SI sessions and drop-in tutoring available at the Writing Center, Language Resource Center and Hesse Learning Center. Spots in the ASC Peer Tutoring Program may be limited based on the demand and availability of peer tutors; however, the majority of students who request tutoring are successfully placed in the program and receive 1-3 hours of free tutoring per week.

Information about the **Peer Tutoring Program** and the **Strategies for Academic Success** course (GS-100) is available on the ASC website where students will also be able to access a directory of links to other campus units that provide academic support.

Contact Information:

Website: [valpo.edu/academicsuccess](http://valpo.edu/academicsuccess)

Email: [Academic.Success@valpo.edu](mailto:Academic.Success@valpo.edu)

Phone: 219-464-5985

Director: Tricia A. White

Location: Christopher Center Library, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, room 100A

#### WRITING CENTER:

Anyone enrolled or employed by Valparaiso University may come to the Writing Center to consult about writing related to courses, employment at the university, job search, and applications or scholarships. Peer consultants or the professional director will gladly offer help in face-to-face conferences, online exchanges, or through facebook chat. Consultation is free of charge. We encourage students to confer at several stages of a project—getting ideas, drafting, and revision. Students may drop-in or go to [tutor.valpo.edu](http://tutor.valpo.edu) to set up an appointment.

Writing consultants employ methods to suit a student's needs, such as assisting with formatting citations for students with visual disabilities, assisting with organizational aids for students with attention deficit, or proofreading assistance for a student with dyslexia.

Location: Christopher Center, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

Weekdays: 9am - 5pm

Evenings Sun-Thurs: 7pm-9pm

Facebook chat: Sun - Thurs, 9 pm-10:30 pm

219 464-5216

[writing.center@valpo.edu](mailto:writing.center@valpo.edu)

#### HESSE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER:

In the Hesse Center, students have the opportunity to get free walk-in tutoring in PreCalculus, Calculus, Physics 141 and 142, and many Engineering classes. While the services in the Hesse Center are targeted at engineering students, all Valpo students taking these classes can utilize the tutoring support provided and are encouraged to attend regularly. All the

tutors are engineering majors and are trained to use questioning techniques to help students reach a better understanding of the material. In addition to walk-in tutoring support, the Hesse Center offers Freshmen Study Tables covering Calculus, Physics 141, and GE 100 in the quiet study lounge in Lankenau and help sessions for PreCalculus, ME 104, Statics, Dynamics, and several ECE courses.

The Hesse Center is located in GEM 123 and provides walk-in tutoring on Sunday 7- 10 pm

Monday - Thursday 10 am - 5 pm and 7 - 10 pm

Friday 10 am - 2 pm

Academic coaching, study strategy training, and individual tutoring plans are provided by the Hesse Center Director upon request. For additional information, please contact Laura Sanders at 219-464-5210 or [Laura.Sanders@valpo.edu](mailto:Laura.Sanders@valpo.edu).

#### LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER:

At the Language Resource Center students can take advantage of the Language Partner Program, the Language Café, a growing collection of films, reference and enrichment materials, and an open computer lab. The LRC provides online and onsite support in a variety of ways for students of Chinese, French, German, Greek, Japanese, Latin and Spanish. In fall 2012 the LRC will open a new facility within the new Arts and Sciences building; through 2011-2012 the LRC can be found in Meier Hall rooms 144 and 145. Because most language classes are held in Meier, students can easily meet casually for conversation in between classes or grab some coffee in the Language Café while listening to global music or watching international TV.

Free tutoring is available through the LRC Language Partner Program. Language partners provide first-level academic support in order to help students of all levels and abilities improve their skills and/or course grade. Students can meet with a language partner for specialized support in French, German, Greek, Latin and Spanish. Most language partners have a set schedule, are available for drop-in or by-appointment sessions, and can meet students for a one-time session or on a weekly basis. Students needing any level of support should first speak with their professor and then contact the LRC. Details on how to request a tutoring session can be found at [valpo.edu/foreignlanguages/lrc](http://valpo.edu/foreignlanguages/lrc). Here you'll also find current LRC hours and

other details. If you have questions, please stop by the LRC or contact us at [lrc@valpo.edu](mailto:lrc@valpo.edu) or 219.464.5764.

### STUDENT-ATHLETE ACADEMIC SERVICES:

Student-Athlete Academic Services, works together with professors, coaches and administrators, to help student-athletes maximize resources and opportunities. We are here to help you achieve your goals.

#### Study Table

Ask your coach about Study Table requirements for your team.

#### Tracking Academic Progress

- Freshmen receive 4-week reports of class attendance and performance.
- Half way through the semester, student-athletes receive either freshmen midterm grades or course evaluations.
- In addition, when needed, Unsatisfactory Reports are e-mailed to alert students of academic concerns.

If you have academic difficulties **don't wait**, contact Student-Athlete Academic Services for help.

#### 1-on-1 Meetings: GOALS & GPA

- Set goals. Discuss challenges.
- Calculate your GPA (current and projected, future).
- Develop strategies to achieve your academic and career goals.

#### Lending Library and Laptops for road trips

Laptops are available to student-athletes who will be off campus for athletic competition. Tape recorders, books, and preparatory guides (Praxis, GRE, etc.) are also available.

#### Post Graduate Scholarship Assistance

A variety of scholarships are available.

Kathleen Marlowe, Director  
ARC, Room 269B  
(219)464-5424  
[Kathleen.Marlowe@valpo.edu](mailto:Kathleen.Marlowe@valpo.edu)

### COUNSELING SERVICES:

Counseling Services offers a broad range of preventative, remedial, and developmental services to the Valparaiso University community. We assist students in functioning more effectively in the University environment by helping them define and accomplish their personal and academic goals. Counseling is a relationship between a counselor and a client seeking help. The relationship is one of trust and confidence in which clients learn to explore themselves and their abilities to cope with life more effectively. Counselors believe that individuals have worth, dignity, and the capability of solving their own problems when they understand themselves and their alternatives. Counseling can go beyond helping people solve problems. It may also be helpful in promoting personal growth and development.

The staff of Counseling Services welcomes all students and embraces a philosophy respectful of diversity. We are supportive of clients' diverse racial, ethnic, national and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities, language, class, gender, age, and religious/spiritual beliefs. We are committed to helping all students deal with discrimination and identity issues.

Counseling Center  
Stewart Cooper, Director  
phone: 219-464-5002  
fax: 219-464-6865  
[Counseling.Center@valpo.edu](mailto:Counseling.Center@valpo.edu)

### **B. Additional Informational Resources**

1. Vocational Rehabilitation: Indiana: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a state program which assists people with disabilities to obtain services that help them prepare to obtain and maintain employment. The program is administered by the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) under the authority of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). Eligibility for VR services is based on state and federal requirements.  
Local office: 57 Michigan Ave., Valparaiso  
Phone: 219-462-0521

2. The Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD): an international, multicultural organization of professionals committed to full participation in higher education for persons with disabilities.  
<http://ahead.org>  
107 Commerce Center Drive, Suite 204  
Huntersville, NC 28078 USA  
Phone: (704) 947-7779
  
3. Indiana Chapter: Association on Higher Education and Disability  
<http://www.ahead.org/affiliates/indiana>  
President: David Schwarte  
Purdue University  
128 Memorial Mall Drive  
Stewart Center, Room 111  
West Lafayette, IN 47907
  
4. U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights: The mission of the Office for Civil Rights is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation through vigorous enforcement of civil rights.  
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>  
U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Bldg  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-1100  
Telephone: 800-421-3481  
Email: [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov)

### C. List of Contact Numbers

NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Sherry DeMik, Ph.D. Director, Disability Support Services	219-464-5456	sherry.demik@valpo.edu
Paula Katsahnias DSS Administrative Assistant	219-464-6956	paula.katsahnias@valpo.edu
Office of Admissions	219-464-5511	undergrad.admission@valpo.edu
Office of the Registrar	219-464-5212	registrar@valpo.edu
Academic Success Center	219-464-5985	academic.success@valpo.edu
Writing Center	219-464-5216	writing.center@valpo.edu
Hesse Center	219-464-5210	laura.sanders@valpo.edu
Language Resource Center	219-464-5764	lrc@valpo.edu
Student-Athlete Academic Services	219-464-5424	kathleen.marlowe@valpo.edu
Counseling Services	219-464-5002	counseling.center@valpo.edu
Student Health Center	219-464-5060	health.center@valpo.edu
Career Center	219-464-5005	career.center@valpo.edu
VUPD (Campus Police)	219-464-5430 (Non-emergency)	
Vocational Rehabilitation	219-462-0521	
Office of Civil Rights	800-421-3481	OCR@ed.gov
AHEAD	704-947-7779	Web: <a href="http://ahead.org">http://ahead.org</a>

## D. Frequently-Asked Questions about DSS

- Question: Am I required to provide the accommodations requested by the student?

**Yes. If you received notification of the accommodations from the DSS office, the ADA requires that you make those accommodations. If you have questions about the accommodations, check with the DSS office.**

- Question: If my student wants to take a test at the DSS office, how can I get the test there? How and when will I get it back?

**Professors handle this in different ways: 1) The test can be sent to the DSS office by email attachment; 2) DSS personnel can pick up the test from the professor's office or from their department office or the test can be dropped off at the DSS office by the professor; 3) If the professor feels it is appropriate, he/she can put the test in a sealed envelope and have the student bring it to the DSS office. Once the test has been completed by the student, DSS personnel will put the test into an envelope and seal it, and the test will be hand delivered to the office or the department office of the professor. We do not recommend sending tests through the Campus Mail.**

- Question: How can students get an auditory/electronic version of my textbook?

**Some students make a request to get their textbooks in an auditory version so they can hear the information. One way to do this is through "Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic." This should be handled by the student, but the DSS office will assist the student in applying for their services. There is a fee for applying for RFB&D. Another way to get an electronic version of the textbook is by contacting the publishing company for the textbook. Not all publishing companies offer this option, but many do; the DSS office will assist the student in this process. If neither of these options is possible, the DSS office can scan the textbook and make a word file from the information. This is more time consuming and should be requested in advance of needing the word file. Once the student has the textbook in an auditory form, he will need to have a screen reader on a computer to listen to it. Some students have a screen reader on their personal laptop. Others will use the computers in the Christopher Center that have screen readers. Students who have a Kindle or Nook or an iPad can purchase and download their textbooks and listen to the books on these tools.**

- Question: I have a student in my class who I think might have a disability. What should I do to help him?

**First ask the student what he has done to get some help. Has he asked for help from the Academic Success Center or gone to any organized Help Sessions? Next, the student will need to be evaluated to determine if he has a disability. We do not do that at VU. If the student is having a medical problem, he should begin by seeing his doctor. If the problem might be a learning disability or ADHD, he could see a clinical psychologist for testing. These folks are generally pretty expensive, though, and insurance doesn't always cover the cost. The DSS office will not be able to provide accommodations for him without the documentation described in Section III.**
- Question: A student in my class asked me for assistance getting notes. After I have made these arrangements, the student has missed most of the lectures. Should he be getting these notes?

**If a student with a disability regularly skips class, then he or she has no right to get notes on the skipped days. The note taker should be informed of this. If the student has a legitimate excuse for the absence (like an illness), handle the situation as you would with all other students.**
- Question: If a DSS student has excessive absences, is this considered to be accommodated?

**No. Excuse of absences is not considered an accommodation, especially if they are unexcused. However, if it is clear that the absences are related to the disability, some flexibility might be considered, up to a point. Even with a medical condition, when the student is missing so much class that she cannot keep up, you should have a discussion with the Dean regarding whether the student should take a medical leave of absence.**
- Question: Am I required to lower the standards of a required assignment because a student has a disability?

**No. Standards should be the same for all students; however, some students with disabilities may exhibit their knowledge, production, and other course expectations differently than their peers. For example, a student with a learning disability in writing may produce an essay exam by using a computer or scribe rather than writing out an answer without the use of accommodations. The quality of the work should be the same.**

- Question: I have a student who is behind in her classwork. This student has missed a number of classes and has not handed in several assignments. Although he has taken a midterm and used accommodations, he received a D for the midterm. At this point, he is not passing the class. Do I have the right to fail a student with a disability?  
**Yes. A student with a disability has the same right to fail as anyone else. Their work should be equivalent to their peers. It may be a good idea to discuss your observations with this student, just as you would with anyone else in your class who is experiencing difficulty.**
- Question: A student came to me in the sixth week of the semester requesting accommodations. I feel this is too late to ask for accommodations and that arrangements should be made at the beginning of the semester. I even had the DSS Statement in my syllabus. Do I have to provide accommodations for someone this late?  
**Yes. There could be numerous reasons why a student makes a late request. Perhaps she could not get the documentation of her disability any earlier and, therefore, could not initiate accommodations earlier. Some students try to see how well they can do in a class without accommodations, but later decide they will need the accommodations after all if they want to do well in the class. Whatever the reason, students are allowed to make requests for accommodations at any time during the semester.**
- Question: Am I required to give a student extended time on a test on Blackboard, when the test is set for a limited amount of time?  
**Yes. There is a way to make that test available for the DSS student with an extended amount of time. Check with the Blackboard specialists in IT for assistance to do this.**

#### **E. Final Comments: Some Tips for Success**

1. There are often special considerations when instructing students with disabilities. Use best practice ideas for teaching.
2. Practice Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in your classroom. UDL is an approach to designing course instruction, materials, evaluation, activities, and content in such a way that *all* people can participate in the educational process; accommodations are not necessary because creative options for learning and evaluation are available to anyone participating in a class.
3. Collaborate regularly with the DSS student and communicate with DSS personnel when you have any questions or concerns. Let DSS know if

- the DSS student is in danger of failing or if you feel the student is giving little effort or is cheating.
4. Remember that each student with a disability is unique; don't expect them to respond or function in the same way.
  5. Be sensitive to disability-related etiquette. For example: If a student with a disability has a guide dog, understand that this is a working animal – do not pet or feed the dog while it is working.
  6. Be receptive to meeting with students with disabilities during office to clarify disability issues or curriculum work.
  7. Help facilitate study partners or note takers for the student with a disability if he needs that.
  8. When possible, provide strategies or aids to help the student with structure and organization. Some examples are: a syllabus with clear expectations and due dates, study guides for tests, notes on Blackboard before class begins, and review sessions.
  9. Make sure to include the student in your classroom community; model your acceptance for the students with disabilities for their peers.
  10. The DSS student has been told by our office to come to you at the first of the semester to discuss his accommodations. If you have a student that you know has a disability but hasn't come to talk to you, it is possible that the student has intended to talk to you but has neglected to do so and may say something later when he remembers. If you got a letter from our office for the semester, then the student has told our office that he does want the accommodations. Try to be understanding and realize that not remembering to do this might be part of his disability.
  11. Show courtesy to your students with disabilities by using "person-first language." This means that the person is emphasized first, the disability second. See the guide for use of person-first language in Appendix F.
  12. Remember that individuals with disabilities will be guaranteed the same right to accommodations in the work world when they leave college. It is not just something done in universities to make things easier for them. The purpose for accommodations is not to give them an advantage; it is to give them a break – to level the playing field to complete the work that they are capable of doing!