



Student Handbook

for

Disability Support Services

**University Village Clubhouse
100 Village Drive
Magnolia, Arkansas
(870) 235-4145**

Preface

The staff of Disability Support Services welcomes you to Southern Arkansas University! The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) is committed to providing academic accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. The Office also strives to support the University in the inclusion of students with disabilities as independent, responsible, and productive members of the campus community.

This manual was created to outline policies and procedures, as well as to answer any questions regarding the services available to students with disabilities at Southern Arkansas University and to specify the various procedures essential to obtain them. It is our hope that the information provided addresses your needs. If you have any concern that is not covered in this handbook, please feel free to contact a staff member in the Disability Support Services office for further assistance.

Office of Disability Support Services
Southern Arkansas University
100 East University
Magnolia, AR 71753-9375
Office: 870-235-4145
Fax: 870-235-5262

Physical Address: University Village Clubhouse
100 Village Drive
Magnolia, AR 71753

Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Disability Support Services at Southern Arkansas University is to promote an accessible and supportive learning environment where students with disabilities are empowered to achieve their academic goals.

We are committed to ensuring access to university programs, services, and activities through the coordination of reasonable accommodations, advocacy, and collaboration with students, faculty, and staff. Guided by principles of accessibility, respect, and integrity, our office works to remove barriers, increase awareness, and foster a campus culture that values the abilities and contributions of all students.

Disability Support Services

The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) is here to assist students in gaining equal access to all Southern Arkansas University services and to help meet their accommodation needs in the classroom.

DSS serves students with learning, hearing, visual, mobility, medical, and psychiatric disabilities, and more. DSS staff members can help students develop an individualized plan to make the most of their college career.

DSS provides intake, assessment of needs on campus, and facilitation of academic and other accommodations for students with disabilities attending SAU. The office acts as a liaison between students and faculty, as well as with community agencies such as Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. The department advises SAU administration on policies and procedures relevant to students and employees with disabilities and acts as a general information and referral service on disability issues.

DSS staff work with students individually and behind the scenes advocating on behalf of the entire group of students with disabilities. DSS provides training to faculty and staff so that the SAU community gains a greater understanding of the students' needs and of the advantages of a team approach to serving students with disabilities.

Nondiscrimination Policy for Students with Disabilities

Southern Arkansas University is committed to the spirit and letter of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The University is also subject to the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under Section 504, the University has instituted various administrative policies, practices, and procedures to ensure nondiscrimination against individuals with disabilities. These policies, practices, and procedures have been amended to comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504.

Accordingly, “no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be either excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities” of SAU. Moreover, no qualified individual with a disability shall be discriminated against because of the disability of that individual regarding on-campus employment.

Compliance Responsibility

Responsibility for coordinating Southern Arkansas University’s compliance with the requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act resides with the Offices of Disability Support Services, Physical Plant, and Vice-President for Administration and General Counsel.

Southern Arkansas University is committed to ensuring equal access to educational opportunities, programs, and services for students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and applicable state laws. To facilitate this commitment, the following policy outlines the authority and process for determining reasonable accommodations.

Designated Office: The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) at Southern Arkansas University is the sole office authorized to evaluate disability documentation and determine reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. This includes academic, housing, dining, and other university-related accommodations necessary to ensure equal access.

Centralized Decision-Making: The authority to determine accommodations rests exclusively with DSS staff who have appropriate training and expertise in disability law, functional limitations, and institutional resources. Faculty and staff may be consulted as part of the interactive process, but do not have the authority to independently approve or deny accommodations.

Institutional Endorsement: The responsibility and authority granted to the Office of Disability Support Services is endorsed by the University’s senior administration, including the President, and is executed on behalf of the institution. This ensures consistency in the accommodation process and reinforces the University's legal and ethical obligations.

Scope: This policy applies to all current and prospective SAU students requesting disability-related accommodations. It also serves as guidance for faculty, staff, and departments in understanding their role in supporting accommodation implementation, while recognizing DSS as the central authority.

Review and Updates: This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the Office of Disability Support Services, in consultation with University leadership, to ensure ongoing compliance with federal and state regulations and to reflect best practices in disability services.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities at the University have the **right** to:

- Equal opportunity to learn and participate in the program activities, services, and facilities of the University through the provision of reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Confidentiality of information about their disability except as disclosures are required or permitted by law.
- Accessible formats of information and means of communication.
- File a complaint in accordance with the University section 504/ADA grievance procedures if they believe they have been subject to discrimination on the basis of disability or have been denied access or accommodation as required by law.

Students with disabilities at the University have the **responsibility** to:

- Meet qualifications (be 'otherwise qualified') and maintain the essential University standards for courses, programs, services, and activities.
- Self-identify as an individual with a disability and seek information, counsel, and assistance when necessary.
- Follow procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations.
- Contact each instructor to let them know he/she is working with the DSS office on accommodations.
- Contact each instructor in order to utilize accommodations to make known his/her accommodation requests. (Instructors will receive official letter from DSS as well, but it is up to the student to communicate with each instructor.)
- Provide comprehensive documentation that details the manner in which the disability may impact participation in programs and activities of the University, and that supports each accommodation request.
- Contact other agencies for services for which he/she may be eligible (Social Security, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.).
- Arrange for personal attendants and/or personal items, if needed. Colleges and universities are not required under ADA to provide personal attendants, tutors, or personal items such as hearing aids, prostheses, individually designed and fitted special extensions or wands for computer or other resource operation.

Rights and Responsibilities of Disability Support Services

The Office of Disability Support Services has the **responsibility** to:

- Provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services for students.

- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication, except where permitted or required by law.
- Make referrals to the Counseling Center, Student Health Center, Student Life, and other departments or organizations as needed.

The Office of Disability Support Services and Southern Arkansas University have the **right** to:

- Identify essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge and standards for courses, programs, services, activities and facilities, and to evaluate all students equally on these bases.
- Request and receive, through the Disability Support Service, current documentation that supports accommodation requests.
- Select from among equally effective accommodations to provide for students and do so in a timely manner.
- Refuse an unreasonable accommodation request that imposes a fundamental alteration on a course, program, or activity of the University.
- Deny a request for an accommodation if documentation does not support the request, or if documentation is not provided.

Southern Arkansas University has the **responsibility** to:

- Provide information to students in accessible formats.
- Provide and facilitate reasonable accommodations for students in courses, programs, services, activities and facilities of the University.
- Ensure that programs, services and activities are available and usable in the most integrated and accessible settings possible.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communications.

Helpful Information about Disability Support Services

- The purpose of disability accommodations is to prevent discrimination on the basis of disability: Specific barriers that significantly impact the student and impede access to the same opportunities as their peers.
- A provider's letter with a diagnosis and a recommendation does not automatically guarantee an accommodation of choice. The letter is not a prescription, nor are disability accommodations in Higher Ed an Entitlement Program.
 - The doctor, therapist, or provider is welcome to provide suggestions for accommodations from their medical perspective.
 - Our Disability Support Services Director will review provider recommendations but will make accommodation decisions based on the

interactive process with the student and based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the ADA and its amendments, and the Fair Housing Act as they apply to higher education institutions; and in accordance with the institutional knowledge of opportunities provided to all via Southern Arkansas University's housing program.

- Accommodations are not determined to ensure success (as is the law for K-12 institutions). Higher Education disability laws ensure *equal access* to the same features/programs/facilities as all other students. Our University wants *all* students to succeed, but at the Higher Education level, success is up to the student.
- Reasonable accommodations, by their nature, are designed to increase inclusion for a student with a disability so that they have access to the same opportunities as their peers. Reasonable accommodations are not intended to excuse the responsibilities or expectations the University holds for all students.

Pre-Admissions Meetings

All prospective students are encouraged to contact Disability Services in the early stages of their college planning. Disability support service staff are available by appointment to meet with prospective students prior to their admission to the University. Pre-admissions meetings may cover such topics as eligibility for services, documentation requirements, types of services available, housing considerations, and transition to college.

Documentation of Disability

Students with a disability who are seeking accommodations at Southern Arkansas University are required to submit documentation to the Disability Support Services office. The purpose of verifying documentation is to establish the existence of a disability as defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

To establish the existence of a disability under these statutes, the documentation must demonstrate that the condition is a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. Life activities that are typically of great importance to college students are such functions as reading, listening, walking, writing, learning, and speaking, as well as the basic functions of eating, sleeping, sitting, etc.

The FUNCTIONAL Impact of the Disability

For the University to be able to determine whether reasonable accommodations can be designed, we need detailed information about the IMPACT of the disability. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act specifically restricts colleges from having “pre-packaged” accommodations that are automatically provided to students based on the diagnostic name or category of the student’s disability. Colleges must review each individual student’s disability and the functional impact of the disability.

However, merely establishing the existence of a disability under Section 504 and ADA only means that the individual has a right to access programs and services. It does not mean that a need for accommodations has been established.

DSS may request objective details, sub-scores of testing, descriptive information specifying what functions are limited, how, and to what degree the disability limits a major life activity. This information improves our ability to identify accommodation resources available on our campus, and available in different academic disciplines. We can then apply those resources appropriately to assure the best possible reasonable access to our programs and services.

Provide Verifying Documentation

DSS may request a diagnostic statement and a full clinical description of the condition from professionals such as psychologists, medical doctors, psychiatrists or neurologists. The

professional should be experienced in diagnosing and treating the disability, should prepare the documentation on appropriate clinical stationery, should sign the document and should be able to provide the University with verification of experience and expertise in the specialty if asked.

The University **DOES NOT** provide clinical or psychological testing for disabilities. (This may contrast with practices experienced by persons with learning disabilities in high school or elementary school.)

Documentation should be current (within three to five years), but exceptions may be necessary depending upon individual circumstances and/or disability. The required documentation usually includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Learning Disability and/or Attention Deficit Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury – A recent, within five years, written diagnostic evaluation report from a qualified professional (certified school, or clinical psychologist, LD Specialist/Diagnostician, or physician), verifying the diagnosis. This report should include the names of tests administered and all test scores, information on how the disability impacts academic performance, and recommendations (based on the diagnostic evaluation results) for specific learning strategies, academic support services, any prescribed medications, and any other suggested treatment procedures.

Hearing Impairment – An audiological report from a licensed audiologist, verifying the degree of hearing sensitivity or impairment.

Visual Impairment, Physical Disability, Psychiatric Disability and Other Health Concerns – A physician's report on the etiology, evaluation, and prognosis of the disability.

Procedure for Requesting and Receiving Disability-Related Accommodations

This procedure outlines the steps students must follow to request and receive disability-related accommodations at Southern Arkansas University (SAU), ensuring consistency, clarity, and compliance with federal and state laws.

Requesting Accommodations

- **Who May Request:**
Students with a documented disability who are enrolled or planning to enroll at SAU must initiate the accommodation request.
- **How to Request:**
Students must complete an Intake Form and submit appropriate documentation of their disability to the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS). Forms and submission details are available online and in the DSS office.

- **Where to Submit:**
All requests and documentation should be submitted to:
Southern Arkansas University
Office of Disability Support Services
100 E. University, Magnolia, AR 71753
(In person: University Village Clubhouse)
(E-mail: dstracy@saumag.edu)
- All new students must meet with the Director of Disability Support Services to engage in an interactive review process before accommodations can be approved.

Timelines

- Students are encouraged to submit accommodation requests as early as possible, ideally before the start of the semester.
- While requests can be made at any time, some accommodations (e.g., sign language interpreters, alternate format textbooks) may require 2–4 weeks for implementation.
- DSS will begin reviewing the request within 5 business days and will notify the student of the next steps or additional documentation needs.

Faculty Notification

- Once accommodations are approved, DSS will email the student and instructors a formal Accommodation Letter outlining the approved accommodations.
- Students are responsible for communicating with their instructors, either in person or via email, to acknowledge and arrange the implementation of accommodations. (Students should meet with their professors before classes begin or within the first week of class and schedule an appointment to discuss accommodations during professor's office hours.)
- In some cases, DSS may also notify faculty directly, with the student's consent, especially for accommodations requiring coordination.

Specific Accommodation Procedures

- Certain accommodations have separate procedures outlining roles and responsibilities for implementation. These include but are not limited to:
 - Testing accommodations
 - Note-taking or lecture capture services
 - Interpreter or captioning services
- These procedures are available from the DSS office and may be reviewed with the student during the intake or update process.

When Accommodations Are Not Met

- If a student's accommodations are not being provided or implemented appropriately:

- The student should first contact the DSS office immediately.
- If the issue is not resolved, students may follow SAU's Grievance Policy, which is outlined later in this DSS Student Handbook.

Approving Reasonable Accommodations

Identifying reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a collaborative process between the student, the Office of Disability Support Services, and campus officials charged with providing the University's programs, services, and activities.

DSS assists University officials to determine reasonable accommodations for students, taking into consideration recommendations from the physician, psychologist or other clinician that diagnosed the student's disability. DSS also considers reasonable accommodations the student used in previous or similar educational settings and gives consideration to student preferences for reasonable accommodation. While student preference may not always be an option in the postsecondary setting, DSS takes the request into consideration.

In addition, DSS consults with appropriate University officials who have expertise in the areas for which the student is seeking reasonable accommodations. The DSS director meets individually with students to discuss reasonable accommodations. Although some persons may have similar disabilities, each request for reasonable accommodation is considered on a case-by-case basis.

It is important to note that accommodation requests which fundamentally alter the nature of the curriculum or course learning objectives are not considered reasonable under the applicable federal laws.

All reasonable accommodations are individually based on the nature of the disability and the academic environment and are discussed with each student confidentially.

Discussing Accommodations with Instructors

Students may have to give faculty members more information about the specific disability in order to receive appropriate accommodations. Students are not obligated to give any information they feel is personal or does not relate to the requested accommodations. If these efforts are not successful, the student or the faculty member should contact DSS immediately.

Exam (Testing) Accommodation

Exam (or testing) accommodation services are available through the DSS office in conjunction with the students' instructor(s), and dependent upon their eligibility for this

service. **It is the student's responsibility to initiate this service and to comply with the following procedures.**

1. To initiate exam/testing accommodations, each student **MUST** meet with the DSS coordinator to determine his/her eligibility for this accommodation.
2. Each student should schedule an appointment with each instructor, **AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY SEMESTER**, to discuss his/her exam accommodation needs and arrangements. The DSS director will send an accommodation letter verifying the accommodation request.
3. For exam/testing accommodations, it is important to check in with your professor at least 2 days before the test date as a reminder and to be sure both the student and the professor have the same understanding of what will occur. Also, if students are to take tests in the Testing Center, they will need to make an appointment at least two days in advance with the Testing Center to secure a lab space.

Procedures for Scheduling Exams

1. When students know their exam date and time, students can either call or go to the DSS office to schedule the date, time, any special equipment, and room arrangement.
2. All exams are to be scheduled **AT THE SAME TIME** as the student's regular class is scheduled to take them. Exceptions will be made only with instructor approval and/or when a student has back-to-back classes and the student's extended exam time conflicts with their class schedule. In this case, students should explain the situation to their instructor and schedule their exam accordingly.
3. Normal DSS office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and daytime tests should be scheduled during these hours. If a student is enrolled in an evening class, arrangements should be made to either have the instructor proctor the test, or to schedule the test during the Testing Center's hours of operation.
4. When scheduling each exam, students are requested to make both written and verbal requests for any equipment needs (e.g., screen readers, computers, calculators, etc.). Students using DSS equipment **MUST** know how to use the equipment or software **BEFORE** taking exams. No instructional assistance will be provided during the exam.
5. If the student has any questions or concerns while at DSS during an exam, we will make every effort to contact the instructor for clarification. However, instructors may not always be available; students may also want to request that their instructor contact the DSS office at some time **DURING** administration of the student exam to see if they have any questions or problems.

Exam Security Procedures

The following procedures apply to all students taking exams at the University Testing Center:

- Exams are to be scheduled at the same time as the regularly scheduled class time. Exceptions will be granted only after discussion between a DSS staff member and the instructor.
- Students arriving late for an exam (between scheduled time and 15 minutes late) will only be allowed their allotted time. If a student arrives more than 15 minutes LATE from the scheduled start time with DSS, he or she will NOT be allowed to take the exam with DSS.
- Students who begin exams before the regularly scheduled exam time, and complete an exam before their class begins the exam, may be required to remain at DSS for ten minutes after their regularly scheduled class time.
- If a change in exam arrangements is necessary, students should notify the DSS office as soon as possible. If students cancel an exam and/or need to reschedule, the DSS office MUST have written or verbal approval from the instructor.
- All book bags, backpacks, notebooks, books, papers, hats, coats, etc. must be stored in the lockers in the DSS locker area outside the exam rooms. Only such material as indicated by instructors will be allowed in the exam room.
- No food or drinks will be allowed in the testing rooms (exceptions for medical necessity, which should be arranged prior to exam time with DSS Director).
- Students will be asked to empty their pockets before entering an exam room, and all materials will be inspected.
- DSS staff will perform periodic, unannounced checks of exam rooms while students are taking exams. Each exam room is also equipped with security cameras.
- Students who qualify for breaks during exams may use the restroom, drinking fountain, etc., but may **not** leave the building until they have given their completed exam to DSS staff. (Other students should plan on remaining in the testing room until completion of their exam.)
- DSS will notify instructors of students who arrive late, do not show at all, or of any other discrepancies related to the exam.

- If students are suspected of cheating or caught cheating while taking an exam at the Testing Center, instructors will be notified and appropriate action will be taken.

Note Takers/Note-taking Apps

Students who need to focus their concentration and attention on listening, or who find taking notes difficult due to a physical, visual, or hearing limitation may find that utilizing a note taker or a note-taking app better enables them to learn in a lecture situation. A note taker or note-taking app allows the student to focus on the lecture without being overly concerned about taking *detailed* notes. This does NOT dismiss the student from listening and engaging in class content. Students should take notes to the best of their ability, even if using a note taker or note-taking app. For a list of note-taking apps, contact the DSS Director.

Course Substitution Policy

If course substitution is a reasonable accommodation, Southern Arkansas University has a responsibility to consider whether a course is essential to the student's curriculum and whether making a substitution would represent a substantial change to that curriculum.

Southern Arkansas University recognizes that in some cases, substitution of courses that would not fundamentally alter the curriculum or program of study is an appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities.

Students are encouraged to discuss this need with the DSS Director early in their academic career to determine if this is a reasonable request, and to guide the student through the University process.

Before the University considers a request for course substitution, DSS will collaborate with faculty, the Office of Registrar, Administration, and General Counsel to determine if:

- The course in question is required for graduation.
- The course in question is a general education requirement or a required course in the major.
- The student has received appropriate course placement.
- Accommodations have been put in place to allow the student to participate in the usual/typical course of study that leads to academic program completion.

Course Substitution Procedures

1. Students must present requests for course substitutions in writing to DSS. Students should give a semester's notice for the University to examine related information and respond to course substitution requests.

2. Decisions regarding course substitution requests will be made by a committee with representation by DSS, the pertinent program coordinator, and the student's academic advisor. If a course substitution is granted, the program coordinator will determine an alternative course that gives meaningful access to the student's degree or certificate program. After this process, the normal procedure for course substitution approval will be followed.
3. The following is required/critical for the University's determination of a course substitution request:
 - Disability documentation
 - Evidence of need for course substitution
 - Determination of the request as reasonable
 - Additional supporting documentation, if determined necessary
4. Students will be notified in writing of the committee's decision prior to advisement /pre-registration for the ensuing semester.
5. If the request is denied, individual students may file an appeal of the decision in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Confidentiality and Release of Information

The Office of Disability Support Services is committed to ensuring that all information and communication pertaining to a student's disability is maintained as confidential as required or permitted by law. The following guidelines about the treatment of such information have been adopted by DSS. These guidelines incorporate relevant state and federal regulations.

1. No one will have immediate access to student files in DSS except appropriate staff of DSS or Student Support Services, under which our office is guided. Any information regarding a disability is considered confidential and will be shared only with others within the university who have a legitimate educational interest.
2. This information is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
3. Sensitive information in DSS student files will not be released except in accordance with federal and state laws.
4. A student's file may be released pursuant to a court order or subpoena.
5. If a student wishes to have information about his/her disability shared with others outside the University, the student must provide written authorization to the DSS Director to release the information. Before giving such authorization, the student

should understand the purpose of the release and to whom the information is being released.

6. The student should understand that there may be occasions when the Director will share information with institutional personnel regarding a student's disability at his/her discretion if circumstances necessitate the sharing of information and the Director has determined that there is an appropriate legitimate educational interest involved.
7. A student has the right to review his/her own DSS file with reasonable notification.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Grievance Procedure

The office of Disability Support Services and all Southern Arkansas University personnel are committed to a policy of ensuring that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in University programs or activities due to his or her disability.

Students with disabilities are responsible for contacting the Office of Disability Support Services if a reasonable accommodation is not provided in an effective or timely manner. If no resolution is obtained, students who believe they have been discriminated against because of their disability may file a grievance with the Office of Disability Support Services. All grievances must be filed within 10 days of the event or action that initiated the student's complaints.

Southern Arkansas University has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by the U.S. Department of Justice regulations implementing Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Procedures

1. A complaint should be filed in writing, should contain the name and address of the person filing it, and should briefly describe the alleged violation of the regulations.
2. A complaint should be filed within 10 days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation.
3. A preliminary investigation of the complaint to determine if evidence exists that warrants further inquiry shall be made by the ADA Coordinator who shall then refer the complaint to the appropriate university vice president for further investigation. This process provides for informal but thorough investigations giving all interested persons and their representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the complaint.

4. A written determination of the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution, if any, shall be issued by the ADA Coordinator and a copy forwarded to the complainant no later than 15 days after its filing.
5. Files and records related to the complaints filed shall be maintained by the ADA Coordinator.
6. A reconsideration of the case may be requested by the complainant in instances where he or she is dissatisfied with the resolution. The request for reconsideration should be made within 5 days to the Faculty-Staff Appeals and Human Rights Committee who will report its findings to the president.

Personal Care Attendants

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs), who assist an individual with personal needs or activities of daily living, are the responsibility of the student. It is the student's responsibility to recruit, interview, hire, train, pay, etc. the PCAs they need. The student should remember they are the employer and serve as administrator, supervisor, personnel manager and bookkeeper of the arrangement. The University does not provide personal care or attendants.

Tips for students who choose to hire a PCA:

The student should begin the process of hiring PCAs well in advance of their anticipated needs. The students should analyze their needs so that they know how much assistance they will require. The student should know **ahead of time** what their needs are (i.e., specific responsibilities of attendants, time requirements, etc.). Students should be clear and specific when talking to potential PCAs. The student and the attendant need to negotiate the details of the work arrangement. Students may wish to write and sign a contract. They should discuss agreements on pay, duties, and schedule. Students may wish to hire someone on a trial basis. Be sure to set the time length for this "trial."

Students should plan one or two back-up PCAs to be on-call when a substitute is needed. If students are a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) client, they should check with their VR counselor to see if they are eligible for financial reimbursement of PCA costs. Arkansas' Rehabilitation Services (ARS) can be contacted at (800) 330-0632. More information about this resource can be provided through contacting our DSS office.

If students have questions or concerns about the process of employing PCAs, please feel free to discuss it with the DSS Director.

Physical Accessibility and Travel

Most SAU campus buildings are accessible. Students may check with the DSS office for accessible routes and entrances. Information is also available on accessible restrooms and elevators. There are a few places on campus, including some very old buildings that are not accessible. If students need to take a class that is held in one of these places, contact the DSS office and arrangements will be made to move the class. If students need to meet with a faculty/staff member that has an office in an inaccessible area, they should call and arrange to meet at an alternate location.

DSS does not provide ongoing travel assistance. Upon request, we will provide assistance to help students learn accessible routes. Contact the DSS office **in advance** for assistance.

Parking Options

All students and employees choosing to park on campus must purchase a SAU parking permit. Most student parking spots are located around the perimeter of campus.

Handicapped Parking Spaces

There are a limited number of handicapped parking spaces located around campus and if students have handicapped license plates/parking card and a SAU parking permit, they are eligible to use these spaces. **Please note:** students and employees must still have a parking permit to use these spaces on a regular basis. Visitors with handicapped license plates/parking card may use these spaces without purchasing a SAU parking permit.

Procedure for Emergency Evacuation of Persons with Disabilities

Faculty members have primary responsibility to assist students with disabilities in an evacuation process.

1. College faculty/staff members, who have individuals in their class, activity, event, or work/office area with mobility disabilities who need assistance to safely evacuate the building from the first floor of any college facility, should help the individuals(s) by escorting them to the nearest exit.
2. The faculty and/or staff members having a person with mobility disabilities needing to safely evacuate from the upper floors of any building shall place the person needing assistance on the landing, inside the nearest fire stairwell in such a manner as to permit other persons using the fire stairwell to exit unimpeded from the building. Each stairwell will be marked by appropriate signage.

3. The faculty and/or staff members are asked to call the Campus Police with the location of the person needing their assistance. After a verbal response from the Campus Police, the faculty/staff members may leave the building.
4. Campus police, college personnel and personnel from responding emergency agencies will provide safe departure for persons needing assistance from the fire stairwell landing (and from other areas of the buildings) to the exterior of the facility.
5. The faculty member must ensure a student with a visual impairment is escorted to the exit or safe refuge.
6. The faculty member must direct a student with a hearing loss with gestures to an exit if no interpreter is present.

Animal Policy

Service Animal

Service animals are welcome in all buildings on campus and may attend any class, meeting or other event. Reasonable behavior is expected from the dogs while on campus. If a student's dog exhibits unacceptable behavior, the student is expected to employ the proper training techniques to correct the situation.

Cleanliness is mandatory in the campus situation. Daily grooming and occasional baths (at a vet or a family home) should keep dog odor to a minimum. Flea control is essential and adequate preventive measures should be taken. If a flea problem develops, it should be dealt with immediately and in an effective manner by the student. Consideration of others must be taken into account when providing maintenance and hygiene for service animals.

Emotional Support Animal

An "emotional support animal" (ESA), sometimes referred to as a "companion animal" is an animal whose sole responsibility is to provide calming influence, affection, stability or security. An emotional support animal should demonstrate a good temperament and reliable, predictable behavior. Unlike a service animal, an emotional support animal does not assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living, nor does it always accompany a person with a disability. An emotional support animal, however, may be incorporated into a treatment process to assist in alleviating the symptoms of that individual's disability. This treatment occurs only within the person's **residence**. Emotional support animals are not service animals and will not necessarily qualify as a reasonable accommodation under ADA. If they meet the qualifications as a reasonable accommodation, then such animals can only be permitted in housing and not in public indoor areas on campus. Please refer to the ESA Policy for more information about ESAs.

Pet

A pet is an animal kept for companionship. A pet is not considered a service animal or a therapy/emotional support animal, and, therefore is not covered by this policy. Residents are not permitted to keep pets on University property.

Housing (Residence Life)

SAU residence halls offer rooms and facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities. If students need special housing arrangements because of a disability, they should discuss this need with both the DSS Director and the Housing Director. The directors will be able to explain options and recommend the correct procedures to follow. Students must comply with all University housing timelines.

Single Room Requests

Single rooms may be available for students who have disability documentation that clearly specifies a need for this accommodation. To request a single room, students must indicate the need based on a disability on their housing application. Students must also contact the housing office and complete the proper paperwork. For more information on single room requests, please see the Housing policies.

Student Support Services: Academic Enrichment Center/Tutoring

Private or personal tutoring is not a required service for post-secondary institutions to provide to students with disabilities. However, tutoring is provided free of charge to SAU students.

Tutoring and supplemental instruction (SI) are provided through the Office of Student Support Services. Students who have knowledge in a subject typically provide tutoring and supplemental instruction. They are not trained teachers, instructors, or special education experts.

Free tutorial services are offered through Student Support Services. Peer-tutors, under the direction of the Student Support Services Coordinator, assist students having trouble with course work.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a series of weekly review sessions for students taking historically difficult courses. SI is provided for all students who want to improve their understanding of course material and improve their grades. Attendance at sessions is voluntary. It is a chance for students to get together with others in the same class to compare notes, discuss important concepts, develop strategies for studying the subject and test himself/herself before the professor does. An SI leader, a competent student who has previously taken the course, will lead each session.

For information about other resources or campus offerings, please ask our DSS staff. If you have any questions about any information in this handbook, please contact the DSS office for more information.

Southern Arkansas University reserves the right to amend the policies, procedures, and information found herein at any time, as circumstances require. If you have any questions, please contact the Director of Disability Support Services.

We hope you enjoy your time at Southern Arkansas University!

**SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERSITY
ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES (Area Code 870)**

**University Testing Center &
Disability Support Services**

Location: University Village Clubhouse
Phone: 235-4145

University Housing

Location: Nelson 115
Phone: 235-4047

University Health Services

Location: Reynolds Center 215
Phone: 235-5237

University Counseling Center

Location: Reynolds 218
Phone: 235-4911

Information Technology Services

Location: Dolph Camp 108
Phone: 235-4083

Academic Advising and Assistance Center

Location: Overstreet Room 238
Phone: 235-5175

Academic Enrichment Center

Location: Magale Library 104
Phone: 235-4385

The Writing Center

Location: Magale Library Room 101
Phone: 235-4381

Career Services

Location: Reynolds Center 201
Phone: 235-4357

Find more resources on our website at www.saumag.edu