



STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

Mission: Georgia Military College is committed to the full and total inclusion of all individuals and to providing equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all programs, services and activities by:

- Approving and assisting in the provision of reasonable accommodations;
- Encouraging student independence, personal growth, and self-advocacy;
- Promoting diversity and inclusion in all environments;
- Supporting, training and providing resources to faculty, staff and administrators;
- Supporting institutional standards and integrity by valuing high expectations for all students including those with disabilities; and
- Providing guidance and leadership regarding policy decisions and planning.

Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

Georgia Military College is committed to the full and total inclusion of all individuals providing equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all programs, services and activities. Georgia Military College is also supportive of individual rights and responsibilities.

As a public institution receiving Federal funds, Georgia Military College adheres to the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. In accordance with all pertinent federal and state legislation, the institution will ensure reasonable accommodations are provided for students with disabilities through the Office of Student Disability Services.

Institutional policy ensures that reasonable accommodation be made on an individualized case-by-case basis. However, it is the responsibility of the student to identify and disclose his or her disability and make his or her needs known. Georgia Military College will give primary consideration to the individual's request and will provide the reasonable accommodation unless an equally effective aid or service is available, the means chosen would result in a fundamental alteration of Georgia Military College's programs, or the accommodation would result in an undue financial or administrative burden.

Definitions

An individual with a disability is defined as a person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities, 2) has a record of such impairment or 3) is regarded as having such impairment.

"Accommodations" are those adjustments to structure, location or mode of access to the educational environment. Accommodations are to be reasonable and not altering academic standards or expectations and not to place undue financial or administrative hardship on an institution.

Contact Person

The Manager of Student Disability Services is located at the main campus of Georgia Military College at 201 E. Greene Street, Milledgeville, Old Capitol Building, phone: 478-387-4902. For assistance, please contact the campus disability coordinator, the Academic Dean, or the Extension Center Director. For specific contact information, please visit www.gmc.edu/disability-services

PLEASE NOTE THAT DISABILITY WILL NOT BE A FACTOR IN QUALIFYING FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION.

To ensure full translation of this policy for access of individuals with disabilities, two important areas of rights and responsibilities have to be considered: a) the right of the individual with a disability to be included on the basis of criteria that do not unfairly discriminate because of the disability and b) the right of the institution to set and maintain standards for admitting and evaluating the progress of students.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Institution

Georgia Military College recognizes that its basic responsibility is to identify and maintain the academic and technical standards that are fundamental to providing quality academic programs while ensuring the rights of individuals with disabilities. To meet these obligations, Georgia Military College recognizes the following rights and responsibilities:

- Georgia Military has the right to request and receive documentation that supports a request for accommodation. The institution has the right to deny a request if the documentation demonstrates that no accommodation is necessary or if the individual fails to provide such documentation;
- Georgia Military has the right to select among equally effective accommodations for individuals with a disability;
- Georgia Military has the right to refuse an unreasonable accommodation or one that imposes an undue hardship on the institution;
- Georgia Military has the responsibility to ensure that its recruitment information and activities are available and accessible;

- Georgia Military has the responsibility to evaluate applicants based solely on their abilities and qualifications. If an evaluation method or criterion unfairly discriminates against an applicant with a disability, the college will seek reasonable alternatives;
- Georgia Military has the responsibility to ensure that all of its academic programs are accessible and usable;
- Georgia Military has the responsibility to adjust, substitute or waive any academic requirements which unfairly discriminate against students with disabilities and that are not essential to the integrity of the students' academic programs;
- Georgia Military has the responsibility to make reasonable accommodations for a student with a disability in the delivery, instructional method, and evaluation system of a course;
- Georgia Military has the responsibility to inform its applicants and students about the availability of auxiliary aids and the range of possible accommodations as well as the procedures for requesting them; and
- If a request for accommodation is denied, Georgia Military has the responsibility to inform the individual of his or her right to appeal the decision and the procedures for initiating an appeal.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual

An individual with a disability has a right to an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs offered at Georgia Military College. To ensure this right, individuals with disabilities at Georgia Military must identify and disclose a disability to the Office of Student Disability Services, by contacting the Manager of Disability Services or the Disability Coordinator at the campus they are attending. The following rights and responsibilities are placed on the individual:

- Individuals with disabilities have the right to an equal opportunity to learn. They have a right to reasonable accommodations in aspects of their educational experiences such as location, delivery system, or instructional methodologies that limit access, participation, or ability to benefit;
- Individuals with disabilities have the right to an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the academic community. This includes access to services and co-curricular activities when reviewed in their entirety, which are comparable to those provided to any other student;
- Individuals with disabilities have the right to confidentiality of all information and have the right to choose to whom information about their disabilities will be disclosed;

- Individuals with disabilities have the right to information regarding the availability of auxiliary aids and possible accommodations as well as procedures for making requests for either;
- Individuals with disabilities have the right to be informed of procedures for initiating an appeal of a decision by the institution regarding auxiliary aids or accommodations;
- Individuals with disabilities have the right to be informed of procedures for initiating further appeal of an institutional decision through external channels. This typically would be done through filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights or filing a case through the civil court system;
- Individuals with disabilities have the same responsibility as any other student to meet and maintain the institution's academic standards;
- Individuals with disabilities have the responsibility to advocate for their own individual needs and to seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary to be effective self-advocates;
- Individuals with disabilities have the responsibility to demonstrate or document how their disabilities limit their ability to benefit from a particular delivery system, instructional method, or evaluation criteria when they make a request for accommodation;
- Individuals with disabilities have the responsibility to follow published procedures for making such requests and to do so in a timely fashion; and
- Individuals with disabilities have the responsibility to follow published procedures for filing an appeal.

Process for Disability Services at GMC

1. A student requesting accommodations for a disability must complete the online request on our website www.gmc.edu/disability-services. Students may attach any documentation they have (ex. Psychological, Neurological or Orthopedic Evaluation, IEP, or 504 Plan). If a student is unable to attach these to the application, then the student may submit the documents to the Disability Coordinator of their local campus. All documentation is scanned and sent to the Manager of Student Disability Services.
2. Once the request is submitted, the student will be notified to schedule an interview with the Office of Student Disability Services. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face, by phone, or on Zoom. The initial interview with the student is to gain the student's perspective of how their disability impacts their academic performance in the classroom and educational environment.

3. Following the interview, the Manager of Disability Services reviews all submitted documentation and develops the accommodation plan for the student. The student will be notified if the request has been approved or denied. *See* step 6 below for details.
4. Once an accommodation has been developed, the Campus Director or designee meets with the student to review the accommodation plan and next steps.
5. Following this meeting, students with approved accommodations may request through Starfish during each academic term in which the student is enrolled instructor notification letters to notify instructors.
6. Should the institution be unable to support the accommodation request or has offered a reasonable and equally effective accommodation, the student will receive a written letter explaining the denial and/or the alternative accommodation. Students may appeal a denial or an alternative accommodation using first the informal appeals process and then the formal appeals process outlined below:

Level I: Informal Appeal

All questions regarding accommodations should begin with the Manager of Disability Services within 5 working days upon receipt of the accommodation plan, denial letter, or denial of an approved accommodation.

Level II: Formal Appeal

If unresolved, the student shall file a written appeal to the Institutional Dean of Students within 5 working days of a decision from the Manager of Disability Services. A written appeal should include a description of the reason(s) for the appeal and any supporting information/documentation. The Institutional Dean of Students will provide the decision in writing within 3 working days upon receipt of a written appeal. This decision will be final.

If the outcome of the appeal does not resolve the issue, students also have the right to further appeals of an institutional decision through external channels which would typically be done through filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights or a case through the civil system.

Verification Status

The Office of Student Disability Services will assign the student a verification status depending upon the type of disability a student has been diagnosed with and/or the completeness of the documentation submitted:

On-Going – A student who receives an on-going verification has submitted current, complete documentation that clearly exhibits an impact from a disability, which is stable, not expected to change over time, and supports the need for accommodation. These students will not be expected to submit additional documentation unless they request an accommodation that has not already been approved and is not supported by the previously submitted documentation.

Annual Renewal – An annual renewal verification is approved for those students who have a diagnosed disorder or condition, in which the impact may change over time. These students will be required to submit updated documentation on an annual basis to allow the Office of Student Disability Services to adjust the verification status and approved accommodations if necessary.

Temporary – Temporary verification status may be approved for students who have submitted some documentation, which may state a diagnosis but may not be complete or is out-of-date. These students may be verified on a temporary basis, allowing them time to gather the necessary documentation. A temporary verification status may also be given, as resources allow, to students who receive a temporary injury and may need accommodations until the injury is sufficiently healed. These students are verified for the length of time recommended by the treating physician.

Denied – A student may be denied verification for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:

1. submitted documentation which does not support the presence of a diagnosed disorder,
2. a diagnosed disorder that does not rise to the level of being disabling,
3. updated or additional documentation requested that is not submitted,
4. an applicant who is not admitted as a student at the College, or
5. required verification meetings that are not attended by the student and contact from the student has ceased.

Procedure for Requesting Accommodations Each Term

It is the responsibility of the verified students to request accommodations each term if needed. The Office of Student Disability Services does not automatically implement accommodations each term. Students choosing to use accommodations should log in to their Starfish account and indicate which instructors they would like notified about their accommodation. It is the responsibility of the student to meet with each instructor to discuss the Notification Letter and the desired accommodations. Students must request the Notification Letters with Timely Notice prior to the need of the accommodation. Instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations until they have received the electronic letter and are not required to provide accommodations retroactively. Therefore, it is encouraged that the students request accommodations early in the term.

Some accommodations have additional requirements before they can be implemented. These accommodations need to be requested at least three weeks before the start of a term or in a reasonable timeframe because these accommodations involve collaboration and coordination with other departments and companies, which may require weeks to process. Where the accommodation is particularly burdensome or cumbersome, additional time may be necessary.

Georgia Military College will make every effort to provide these accommodations within a reasonable timeframe; however, the closer to the term a student waits before requesting an accommodation, the more likely these resources will not be available by the start of the term. Students eligible for the following accommodations must communicate with the Office of Student Disability Services regarding alternate formats needed as soon as possible.

- Alternative Format materials;

- Assistive Technology; and
- Service Providers. Procedure to Request a Change of Approved Accommodations

Students who have been verified as eligible for accommodations may request additions to or deletions from their previously approved accommodations. Requests must be submitted in writing with a detailed description supporting the need for any changes. The Manager of Student Disability Services will review the request along with all documentation on file to determine any changes. Additional documentation or student interview may be required to facilitate any changes. Disability Services may also contact the student to gather more information about the reasons for the request.