



STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES

The Student Disability Services program is provided to all GMC students to ensure that students needing accommodations are served to ensure equal access.

Mission: GMC 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.
- Support institutional standards and integrity by valuing high expectations for all students, including those with disabilities.
- 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. GMC is also supportive of individual rights and responsibilities.

As a public institution receiving federal funds, GMC 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 is made on an individualized case-by-case basis. However, it is the responsibility of the student to identify and disclose any disability and to make all needs known. GMC will give primary consideration to the individual's request and will provide reasonable accommodation unless an equally effective aid or service is available, the means chosen would result in a fundamental alteration of GMC's programs, or the accommodation would result in an undue financial or administrative burden.

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 adjustments to the structure, location, or mode of access to the educational environment. They must be reasonable, not alter academic standards or expectations, and not place undue financial or administrative hardship on an institution.

Contact Person

The Manager of Student Disability Services is located in the Academic Center of Excellence on the corner of E. Baldwin and S. Jefferson Street in Milledgeville, just south of the Main Campus, phone: 478-387-4902. For specific contact information, please visit their web [page](#).

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

GMC 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, GMC recognizes the following rights and responsibilities:

- GMC 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.
- GMC has the right to select among equally effective accommodations for individuals with a disability.
- GMC has the right to refuse unreasonable accommodations or ones that impose an undue hardship on the institution.
- GMC is responsible for ensuring that its recruitment information and activities are available and accessible.
- GMC is responsible for evaluating 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.
- GMC is responsible for ensuring that all of its academic programs are accessible and usable.
- GMC has the responsibility to adjust, substitute, or waive any academic requirements that unfairly discriminate against students with disabilities and that are not essential to the integrity of the students' academic programs.
- GMC is responsible for making reasonable accommodations for a student with a disability in the delivery, instructional method, and evaluation system of a course.
- GMC is responsible for informing its applicants and students about the availability of auxiliary aids and the range of possible

accommodations as well as the procedures for requesting them.

- If a request for accommodation is denied, GMC is responsible for informing the individual of the 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 GMC. To ensure this right, individuals with disabilities at GMC must identify and disclose a disability to the Office of Student Disability Services by contacting the Manager of Disability Services. 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 that are comparable to those provided to any other student when reviewed in their entirety.
- 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 and procedures for making requests for either.
- Individuals with disabilities have the right to be informed of procedures for initiating an appeal of an institution's decision regarding auxiliary aids or accommodations.
- Individuals with disabilities have the right to be informed of

procedures for initiating a further appeal of an institutional decision through external channels. Typically, this would be done through filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights or 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 are responsible for advocating for their own individual needs and seeking 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 are responsible for following published procedures for making such requests and doing so in a timely fashion.
- Individuals with disabilities have the responsibility to follow published procedures for filing an appeal.

Verification Process

The Verification Process will be determined by the Office of Student Disability Services.

Process for Disability Services at GMC

- Students requesting accommodations for a disability must complete the online request on our website: <https://www.gmc.edu/disability-services>. Students may email and attach documentation from specialists trained in the field of study for diagnosing and/or treating the disability (e.g., Psychological, Neurological, or Orthopedic Evaluation) to the Manager of Student Disability Services at cwells@gmc.edu. The date of the diagnosis **must be within 36 months** from the date of the application.

Students can also submit documents to their local Campus Director. All documentation is scanned and sent to the Manager of Student Disability Services.

- Once the applicant completes the application, the Office of Student Disability Services will contact the student to schedule an interview. 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.
- Following the interview, the Manager reviews the documentation and keeps it on record. The manager then develops the accommodation plan for the student and contacts the student to request a meeting be scheduled.
- Once an accommodation plan has been developed, the Campus Director or designee meets with the student plan to review it.
- Should the institution be unable to support the accommodation request or have 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 be directed to the Manager of Student Disability Services. Within 5 working days upon receipt of the accommodation plan, denial letter, or denial of an approved accommodation.

Level II: Formal Appeal

- Should a student disagree with any decision made by the Manager of Student Disability Services, such as denial and accommodation request as a whole or denial of an individual accommodation, the student

shall file a written appeal to the Institutional Dean of Students. 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 within 5 working days upon the receipt of a written appeal. This decision is final.

- If the outcome of the appeal does not resolve the issue, students also have the right to further appeal an institutional decision through external channels, which would typically be done through filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) or a case through the civil system.
- Following this meeting, the students will request accommodations for a given academic term through the Starfish program. Students can request Instructor Notification Letters each quarter in Starfish and will receive a copy by email when the request is complete.

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 ongoing 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 students who have a diagnosed disorder or condition whose 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 approve

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. As resources allow, a temporary verification status may also be given 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 the treating physician recommends.

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

1. Submitted documentation that 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 has not been submitted.
4. An applicant who is not admitted as a student at the College.
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 submit their quarter request, providing appropriate information. **The student is responsible for meeting 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, the students are encouraged to 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. Additional time may be necessary when the accommodation is particularly burdensome or cumbersome. GMC 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 should supply their schedules to the Office of Student Disability Services at registration, should communicate any schedule changes as soon as possible, and should communicate with the Office of Student Disability Services regarding alternate formats needed as soon as possible.

- Alternative Format materials.
- Assistive Technology.
- 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 interviews may be required to facilitate any changes. Student Disability Services may also contact the student to gather more information about the reasons for the request.