

## **Policies and Procedures:**

### **1. Rights of Bridgewater State University Under 504 and the ADA**

#### **The University has the right to:**

- Identify and establish the abilities, skills, and knowledge that are fundamental to academic programs/courses and to evaluate each student's performance against these standards. Fundamental program and course standards are not subject to modification.
- Request and receive documentation that supports a student's request for accommodations. The University has a right to deny a request if the documentation demonstrates that no accommodation is necessary, or if the student fails to provide such documentation.
- Select among equally effective accommodations for an individual with a disability.
- Refuse an unreasonable accommodation or one that imposes an undue hardship on the University.

#### **Students with disabilities have the right to:**

- Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the academic community. This includes access to services, benefits, co-curricular activities, housing and transportation, when viewed in their entirety, that are comparable to those provided to any student.
- Information regarding the availability of auxiliary aids and possible accommodations as well as procedures for making requests for either.
- Confidentiality of all information and the right to choose to whom information about their disabilities will be disclosed.

### **Disability Resources Program Requirements:**

#### **2. Documentation Guidelines for Students With Disabilities**

##### **Documentation Guidelines for Students with LD/ADHD:**

- Evaluation conducted by a qualified professional.
- Testing must be current (within 3 years of date of admission).
- Documentation should be comprehensive:
  - \* Diagnostic interview
  - \* Assessment: aptitude, achievement, and information processing.
- Documentation must include a specific diagnosis.
- Actual test scores from standardized instruments, and clinical summary should be provided.
- Medical documentation from a physician may be appropriate documentation for ADHD.

##### **Documentation for Students with Psychological Disabilities:**

- Must be based on DSM-IV criteria.

- Show evidence of a disability which would substantially limit access to learning.
- Must be recent.
- Must show the actual evaluation date.
- Medications should be noted and how they may impact on learning or attendance.
- Reports should be submitted on professional letterhead and must contain the names, titles, and license information of the evaluator.

#### **Documentation for Students with Physical/Medical Disabilities:**

- Must be recent, within three years of admission to BSU and from a licensed physician.
- Must state the nature and severity of the condition as well as the expected duration, or progression of the condition.
- All treatments, medications, or devices currently prescribed must also be noted.
- Letter should be submitted on professional letterhead and must contain the names, titles, and license information of the evaluator.

#### **Determining Eligibility for Services**

- Students seeking services or accommodation must set up an appointment to meet with a member of the Disability Resources staff. During the meeting the student's expressed requests for service and/or accommodation and the disability documentation will be reviewed. Eligibility for services is determined through an examination of the student's description of need and the thoroughness of the disability documentation. If the student is eligible for services, a plan for accommodation will be developed which includes training in the use of the recommended accommodations or services.

#### **Determining Reasonable Accommodations**

- Reasonable accommodations are based on students' documentation to provide access to courses, program, service, activities or facilities that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to similarly situated students without disabilities. The University is obligated to provide accommodation only to the known limitations of an otherwise qualified student with a disability. To determine reasonable accommodations the Disability Resources staff may seek information from appropriate University personnel regarding essential standards for courses, programs, services, activities and facilities.

### **3. Disability Resources Program Support Services and Accommodations**

#### **Accessibility – Campus Accessibility Statement**

It is the policy of Bridgewater State University to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008 (ADAAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other applicable laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability. The University is committed to providing equal and integrated access for

individuals with disabilities to all the academic, social, cultural, and recreational programs it offers.

Although the achievement of architectural and physical access is a work-in-progress, the University has accessible travel ways throughout most of the campus and offers accessible campus bus service. Most buildings are accessible with the use of ramps, lifts and elevators. Each campus parking lot has accessible parking.

The University continually works to improve campus accessibility. It has recently begun to undertake a number of construction projects and renovations that will affect the campus. These current and future projects, as well as any periodic work by the Town of Bridgewater, may temporarily impact or disrupt accessible travel routes, building accessibility and/or parking. In an effort to provide the community with as much information as possible regarding such disruptions, the University will promptly issue a campus-wide email to all students, faculty and staff concerning the disruptions and provide information regarding alternative modes of access.

While most of the University's classrooms are physically accessible, students with disabilities are encouraged to plan their schedules to permit adequate travel time between classes. If a class is scheduled in a room which is not accessible to the student, students may want to determine if there is another section in an accessible room. After considering all alternatives, students should contact the Disability Resources Office to arrange to move a class to an accessible location. The Disability Resources Office is located in the Academic Achievement on the ground floor of the Maxwell Library. Tel: 508-531-2194, TTY 508-531-6113 and email [Disability\\_Resources@bridgew.edu](mailto:Disability_Resources@bridgew.edu).

The Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity is the designated office to provide information and coordinate all other services regarding physical access to the campus. Students, faculty, staff, and guests with concerns or questions regarding campus accessibility may contact the Office as follows:

Dr. Alan V. Comedy  
Section 504/ADA Coordinator  
Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity  
Boyden Hall, Room 206  
131 Summer Street  
Bridgewater, MA 02325  
Tel: 508.531.1241  
Email: [acomedy@bridgew.edu](mailto:acomedy@bridgew.edu)

### **Assistive Technology**

At the Adaptive Technology Labs at the Moakley Center, the first floor of Maxwell Library, and the Disability Resources Office, print materials can be scanned into digital formats. Print

magnification, speech-to-text, Braille translation and other access enhancing technologies are also available. We offer the following pieces of software in our Adaptive Lab:

- Kurzweil 3000
- JAWS
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- ZoomText
- Inspiration
- Scientific Notebook
- Duxbury Braille

In line with the University's recommended specifications for laptops (<http://it.bridgew.edu/notebooks/specs.cfm>), our assistive technology strategy revolves around the Microsoft Windows operating system. While we will make every attempt to assist students who use other operating systems, we can only fully support Windows machines. Unfortunately, there are pieces of assistive software that will only work with Windows. One of these is MathPlayer, software that allows screen readers to access math material.

### **Alternative Texts and Materials**

Students who are blind or vision impaired, or who have learning disabilities, may benefit from textbooks in a digital format that allows the text to be read aloud. Students using alternate format texts should actively seek text title, author and edition information from academic departments and instructors well in advance of the semester to ensure that the text will be available at the start of the semester.

The primary source of audio and digital texts is Learning Ally (formerly RFB&D), 20 Rozel Road, Princeton, NJ 08540, 1-800-221-4792. You can view the on-line catalog at <https://www.learningally.org>. Students who have not already registered with Learning Ally are encouraged to do so if they suspect that they may benefit from digital texts. Other services that students should use to procure accessible texts are:

Bookshare (<https://www.bookshare.org/>)

CourseSmart (<http://www.coursesmart.com/>)

National Library Service (<http://www.loc.gov/nls/>)

Project Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org/>)

If a text is not available in an alternate format, it normally takes at least two months to convert a text to an alternate format. **Note:** Prior to the registration period for spring and summer classes, students may request authorization from the Disability Resources Office to register in advance if they will be using alternative format texts.

### **Auxiliary Aids**

Students needing auxiliary aids should submit requests in writing to the Assistant Director for Disability Resources at least four weeks prior to the start of the semester. The University must have sufficient time to evaluate the request, determine the appropriate accommodation to be provided, and identify how it will be obtained (i.e. purchase, lease, hire, etc.). Late requests cannot be guaranteed, but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and provided as possible under the circumstances. A number of aids are available at no charge, including assistive technology hardware and software, TTY's, accessible tables in classroom and dining areas, tape recorders, and assistive listening devices.

When appropriate, the Disability Resources Office will assist students in identifying agencies (Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Learning Ally) or private charitable organizations (March of Dimes) to obtain auxiliary aids of a long-term or permanent nature or support funding. If the aid is not available through outside resources, the Assistant Director for Disability Resources will evaluate the request to ensure that it is appropriate to the documented needs of the student. Every effort will be made to provide the auxiliary aid or find a reasonable alternative that will allow the student full participation, unless the request is determined to be unreasonable or will impose an undue hardship on the University.

### **Interpreters/CART**

Requests for interpreter or CART services must be made as early as possible prior to the start of the semester. The University employs only appropriately credentialed and qualified interpreters. Students utilizing interpreters or CART during the fall or spring sessions may be authorized for advance registration by the Disability Resources Office.

### **Notetakers/Tape Recording**

Peer notetaker services are provided to students who have received authorization from the LD Specialist or Assistant Director for Disability Resources Office. Generally notetakers are students who are enrolled in the class, who are identified directly by the student requesting the service or through the assistance of the course instructor. Notetakers must register with the Disability Resources Office and the Student Employment Office at the beginning of the semester and will receive a stipend at the conclusion of the semester for providing the service on a consistent basis.

Notes may be copied at any University office photocopier at no charge. Notetakers are not expected to take notes when students are absent unless authorized by the Disability Resources Office.

Students may also be permitted to use tape recorders in class as an accommodation, but must request permission from the instructor before doing so. Cassette recorders and blank tapes may be borrowed from the Media Service Department, Maxwell Library, ground level, on a semester loan basis.

## **Reduced Course Load**

As a general principle most students with disabilities are expected to maintain a full-time course load of a least 12 credits per semester. A student who is deemed appropriate to take fewer than 12 credits must talk with a member of the Disability Resources staff to determine if this is an appropriate accommodation and to consider the effect, if any, on financial aid, medical insurance, housing status, athletic participation and the like.

## **Test Accommodations**

It is the student's responsibility to request test accommodations based on disability documentation. Test accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- extended time
- reduced distraction environment
- taped test or Brailled test
- enlarged materials or alternate type size
- dictated or oral exam
- scribe
- reader
- reduced distraction testing area
- use of a computer
- calculator