

College Students with Disabilities, Reasonable Accommodations and COVID-19 Q&A

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges, universities, and technical schools have made changes in classes, housing, and meal delivery as well as in many other areas. Significant changes have been made at colleges and universities in the use of instructional methods and materials. Moreover, major changes in housing arrangements have been taking place on college campuses as well.

Most colleges in the state of South Carolina are currently offering online classes only. Many colleges are also asking students to find different housing arrangements.

Below are some questions you may be asking and information that we hope will be helpful to you during this difficult time.

Question 1: Do the ADA and Section 504 still protect students with disabilities during the COVID-19 response? Can reasonable accommodations still be made for students with disabilities?

Yes, the ADA and Section 504 still protect students with disabilities during the COVID-19 response. Yes, colleges and universities are still required to provide accommodations needed by college students. Many college students have a disability. The ADA and Section 504 protect these students from discrimination. They also require that colleges and universities provide accommodations needed for college students with disabilities as they are attending online classes and living in different types of housing arrangements.

Examples of disabilities that are protected:

- 1) **Emotional disability** (ex. Anxiety or Depressive Disorder)
- 2) **Cognitive disability** (ex. A Learning Disorder or Intellectual Disability)
- 3) **Physical disability** (ex. A Long-Term Sports Injury and Hearing or Vision Loss)
- 4) **Neurodevelopmental disability** (ex. Autism Spectrum Disorder or ADHD)

To request an accommodation for a disability, you must tell your disability services office that you have a disability. You can then request any accommodations that you may need.

If you reach out to the office by phone, we recommend that you also send a follow-up email confirming that you called. In that same email, write out why you are reaching

out to them. This creates a written record of your request for accommodations for your disability.

Question 2: What are some possible accommodations that I might request due to the changes in classes and housing due to COVID-19?

The following are some possible accommodations you could request:

- 1) Extended time to move out your residence
- 2) Extended time to do written assignments and tests
- 3) Breaks during the day from classes and assignments
- 4) Notetakers
- 5) Audio Recordings of Class Lectures
- 6) Transcription or captions of podcasts and online lectures
- 7) Interpreter services for online class chats
- 8) Ability to use some form of Assistive Technology
- 9) Alternative Testing Sites or Alternative Testing Arrangements
- 10) Alternative Housing Arrangements (ability to stay in a private room or a different housing arrangement)
- 11) Any other accommodations that could make instruction, instructional materials, or your housing arrangements more accessible for you.

Question 3: Before all of the changes in response to COVID-19 I did not need accommodations. Can I request new accommodations now?

Yes, you can request new accommodations now. Tell your teacher and your disability services office **ASAP** if you are having difficulties due to the changes in response to COVID-19.

Question 4: I am being asked to move out of campus housing, but I am having trouble finding a place that is accessible for me because of my disability. Can I request an accommodation?

Yes, you can request an accommodation if you are having difficulty obtaining accessible housing. Tell your student housing office and the disability services office if you are experiencing difficulties due to the change in housing arrangements **ASAP**.

When you contact them, it is important that you share why your living arrangement is not accessible and/or how appropriate accommodations are not being given for your

disability. You should put in writing your request that they make an exception for you due to your disability.

Question 4: Where can I find additional information about accommodations and supports that could assist me during this time?

1. The AHEAD (Association for Higher Education and Disabilities) website has some great information about resources for disability service professionals and college students with disabilities. The guide **AHEAD** created entitled **Maintaining Access to Opportunity in the Face of the Coronavirus Crisis** may be helpful. The link to this free guide is contained on the **COVID-19 section** on the **AHEAD** website.

- Here is the link to the **Coronavirus-COVID-19 section** on the **AHEAD** Website: <https://www.ahead.org/professional-resources/coronavirus-resources>

2. Moreover, the **National Center for College Students with Disabilities** could also be of assistance. Here is the link to their webpage for college students impacted by the Coronavirus: <http://www.nccsdonline.org/coronavirus-covid-19.html>.

Question 5: How can I obtain more information about my legal rights as a college student with a disability?

If you would like more information about **Your Rights as a College Student with a Disability**, you can view our fact sheet here: <https://www.pandasc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ADA-504-College-Students-7-18-1.pdf>.

If you have any further questions about your rights as a college student with a disability or if you would like to contact us, you can call us at **1-866-275-7273** or you can email us at info@pandasc.org.

We wish you the best as you advocate for the assistance you need as college students with disabilities at this time.

This publication provides legal information, but is not intended to be legal advice. As the law may change, please contact P&A for updates.

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