

Academic Access & Inclusion at Rhodes

Working Together: Faculty and Students with Disabilities

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) views disability as an integral part of diversity at Rhodes College. Through collaboration with faculty, staff, and students, we ensure students with disabilities experience access and inclusion in educational programs through accommodations or other modifications.

Last year, 22% of Rhodes students were registered with SAS. This population included students with a variety of documented conditions.

- Learning and Attentional Disorders
- Psychiatric Impairments
- Chronic Health Impairments
- Mobility Impairments
- Sensory Impairments
- Traumatic Brain Injuries
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Temporary Impairments

Legal Issues

In accordance with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, SAS determines reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis for otherwise qualified students who have demonstrated a need for these services.

All accommodation requests are the responsibility of the student. The following chart outlines key differences between high school and college.

	K-12	Post-Secondary
Goal:	Success	Equal Access
Responsible Party:	School System	Adult Student
Primary Advocate:	Parent or Surrogate	Adult Student

Faculty Guidelines for Accommodations

All accommodations should be approved by SAS before being implemented in the classroom. If you believe an accommodation will compromise the academic integrity of your course, contact SAS to discuss the concern.

Registered students are encouraged to meet privately with you to discuss one of three SAS electronic forms.

1. Course Accessibility Letter- outlines approved reasonable accommodations.
2. Provisional Accessibility Letter- lists accommodations with an expiration date, beyond which you are no longer required to provide accommodations.
3. Notification of Chronic Impairment Letter- informs you of a chronic, episodic condition that may interfere with coursework and attendance.

Accommodation Examples

Reasonable accommodations are individualized and based on the nature of the documented disability and the requirements of specific courses. Accommodations are designed to meet the needs of students without fundamentally altering the nature of the college's instructional programs. Following are examples of commonly requested accommodations for different disability categories.

Learning & Attentional Disorders

- Extended time on exams/quizzes
- Testing in a distraction-limited environment
- Texts and PDFs in accessible electronic format for use with reading software
- Assistive technology, smart pen, text-to-speech software, speech-to-text software
- Computer for in-class written work and exams
- Peer note-taker, permission to record lectures
- Use of spellchecker or simple calculator
- Preferential seating

Low Vision & Blindness

- Printed materials in alternative format
- Accessible media such as transcribed audio, electronic version of exams, texts and handouts for use with reading software
- Large print or Braille lab signs and equipment labels
- Raised-line drawings, tactile models of graphic materials, adaptive lab equipment
- Assistive technology, screen enlargement software
- Peer note-taker, permission to record lectures
- Preferential seating
- Audio described videos
- Accessibility Assistant for select labs and courses

Mobility Impairments

- Peer note-taker/lab assistant, group lab assignments
- Classrooms, labs, and field trips in accessible locations
- Adjustable tables, lab equipment located within reach
- Class assignments made available in electronic format
- Assistive technology, speech-to-text software
- Extended time on exams/quizzes
- Food/drinks allowed, permission to leave classroom when disability needs arise

Chronic Health Impairments

- Peer note-taker, permission to record lectures
- Permission to take breaks, food/drinks allowed
- Extended time on exams/quizzes
- Possible flexible attendance requirements

Psychiatric Disorders

- Peer note-taker, permission to record lectures
- Extended time on exams/quizzes, testing in distraction-limited environment
- Permission to take short breaks as disability-related needs arise
- Possible flexible attendance requirements

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

- Sign Language interpreting, captioning services
- Assistive listening device, FM system
- Accessible media such as captioned videos
- Peer note-taker
- Face turned toward student when speaking, use visual aids
- Written assignments, lab instructions, demonstration summaries
- Use of electronic mail for class and private discussions

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Written notification of any changes to syllabus, assignments, or due dates
- Minimize extraneous sounds (e.g., shut the door to keep out ambient noise) when possible
- Testing in a distraction-limited environment
- Permission to leave room when disability-related needs arise
- Marking answers on exam in lieu of Scantron
- Preferential seating

Concussions/Acquired Traumatic Brain Injuries

- Peer note-taker, permission to record lectures
- Extended time on exams/quizzes, testing in distraction-limited environment
- Possible extensions or flexible attendance requirements

Test Accommodations

The Honor Code allows you flexibility in the provision of testing accommodations. Registered students will meet with you privately to discuss their Course Accessibility Letters. For extended time on exam and testing in a distraction-limited environment, discuss preferences and agree on a detailed plan for exam dates. For example, compare faculty/student schedules and decide whether the student will arrive 30 minutes early, stay 30 minutes later, or test at a separate time altogether on exam days.

The Testing Room (303 Barret Library) provides an *optional* non-proctored, distraction-limited testing space for up to 14 students at a time. The room is accessible by fob only to students with approved testing accommodations. There are 2 height adjustable stations and 7 stations with computers.

In order to use the Testing Room, students must schedule an exam time using the online [Testing Room Appointment Link](#) and share their reservation email with you.

Faculty may choose to submit exams to the Library Check-Out Desk for students to pick up and return, or you can post your exam on Moodle, email to the student, or hand it to the student for them to return upon completion. The Test Cover Sheet and detailed Testing Room procedures are available in the [Testing Room Campus Folder](#) on Box.

Other distraction-limited environment options:

- Reserve a campus space for a few students with the same accommodation to test together.
- Use faculty offices or conference rooms that may be temporarily available.
- Allow a student to seek out a quiet space on campus or a study room in the Library.
- Encourage students to use ear plugs (available from SAS) and face away from others.

Inclusive Classroom Techniques

These best practices benefit all students, especially those with disabilities.

Syllabus Statement

- Include a statement on the class syllabus inviting students to discuss academic needs with you. See sample statement below.
- **Access and Accommodations:** *Your experience in this class is important to me. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so we can discuss options. If you have already established accommodations with Student Accessibility Services (SAS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through SAS but have a condition that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or chronic health), please contact SAS at 901-843-3815, Burrow Hall 4th floor, <https://sites.rhodes.edu/accessibility>. SAS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and temporary conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, SAS, and your faculty. It is the policy and practice of Rhodes College to create inclusive, equitable, and accessible learning environments for all students.*

Classroom

- Incorporate visual, auditory, and tactile demonstrations into instruction when possible to appeal to diverse learners.
- During discussions and lectures, use examples that include a variety of characteristics with respect to ability, race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, SES, etc.
- Repeat or rephrase questions or comments from class before responding. Face the class when speaking.
- Write key phrases or lecture outlines on the board. Provide written instructions for assignments.
- Provide written summaries of demonstrations in advance for students with hearing impairments.
- Verbally describe visual aids if there is a student with a visual impairment in class. For example, you might say, "The 3 inch long steel rod," rather than "this."

Course Materials

- Determine essential elements of the course and include them on syllabus.
- Select course materials early. Distribute syllabus, assignments, and reading lists in advance so that student and SAS can assist with accessible formats if needed.
- Use accessible digital course materials (e.g., syllabus, handouts). Use the [SensusAccess](#) resource to convert your materials into accessible formats.
- Whenever possible, select texts that are also available in digital format and use videos with closed captions and audio descriptions.
- Make PowerPoint presentations available to students upon request.

Exams

- Provide testing accommodations, as appropriate. Contact SAS with questions or concerns.
- Ensure exams test the essential skills or knowledge needed for the course.
- Consider multiple assessment methods (e.g., portfolio, multimedia presentation, written, multiple choice).

Labs

- Provide lab orientation, oral and written lab instructions.
- Provide adaptive lab equipment and arrange items so they are easily accessible.
- Assign group lab projects in which all students contribute according to their abilities.

SAS Contact

Visit the [SAS website](#) and the [Student Life Folder](#) under FacStaff Public Information Folder in Box for additional access resources.

For questions regarding student referrals or the provision of accommodations, contact:

Office of Student Accessibility Services

Burrow Hall 4th floor
901-843-3815

accessibilityservices@rhodes.edu

Melissa Butler, Director, butlerm@rhodes.edu
Alexa O'Hara, Care Manager, ohara@rhodes.edu
Ben Boeving, ADHD Coach, boevingb@rhodes.edu

Sections of this resource were adapted from [AccessCollege: The Faculty Room](#), DO-IT, University of Washington.

SAS Resources

The following resources are available to current Rhodes students.

- [Laser Coaching](#)—free weekly group sessions focused on improving executive functioning skills and mapping out a detailed plan for each week. Led by a professional ADHD Coach. Diagnosis not required. Contact boevingb@rhodes.edu for more information.
- [ADHD Coaching](#)—private one-on-one coaching sessions, for an additional fee, with a professional ADHD Coach. Diagnosis not required. Contact Ben Boeving at 901-848-3350 or boevingb@rhodes.edu.
- [SensusAccess](#)—a simple tool to convert PDFs and other digital materials into accessible formats. Simply upload a document, choose an output method, and the converted document will be emailed to your Rhodes address within 10 minutes.
- [Kurzweil Learning Software](#)—an assistive technology learning tool that supports the concept of Universal Design for Learning and makes curricula accessible to all types of learners. Kurzweil includes text-to-speech and speech-to-text capabilities, reading, writing, and study tools. Rhodes has a site-wide license making it available at no charge to all current students, faculty, and staff.
- [Testing Room](#) (303 Barret Library)—non-proctored, distraction-limited testing space accessible by fob only to Rhodes students with approved testing accommodations. Students must schedule using the [Testing Room Appointment Link](#).
- [Campus Map with Accessibility Guide](#)—version of campus map detailing accessible campus routes, ramps, building entrances, restrooms, and parking locations.
- Lynx Cart Service—complimentary intra-campus transportation. Contact Campus Safety at 901-843-3880.
- [Report an Access Barrier](#)—report a physical, electronic, or programmatic barrier by completing this form.
- Community resource referrals (e.g., Memphis area providers who offer comprehensive psychoeducational evaluations for learning and attentional disorders).

Campus Resources

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the following support resources available to ALL Rhodes students.

- [Academic & Learning Resources](#)—Offers individual assistance, workshops, and resources focused on time management, organizational skills, and learning strategies.
- [Career Services](#)—Provides career counseling, self-assessments, career exploration, major exploration, and academic internships.
- [Chaplain](#)—Offers pastoral care, support for spiritual needs, meditation tips, and related resources.
- [Counseling Center](#)—Offers a range of mental health support services, including on-campus short-term individual and group counseling, off-campus teletherapy and in-person short-term counseling, and psychiatric services. Students also have access to a 24/7/365 Support Line (833-434-1217), The Wellness Hub, and the Headspace app.
- [Information Services](#)—Provides help with research and/or information technology needs. Contact the helpdesk at help@rhodes.edu.
- [Language Center](#)—Provides resources and peer tutoring in Chinese, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Latin, and Greek.
- [Mathematical and Computational Reasoning Center](#)—Offers drop-in peer tutoring and peer-led group study for those enrolled in introductory mathematics and computer science courses.
- [Study Abroad](#)—Provides individual advising related to researching study abroad programs, applying for programs, and identifying need-based or merit-based scholarships.
- [Writing Center](#)—Offers assistance for student writers of all levels at any stage of the writing process and for writing in any discipline.
- [Bias Education Response System](#)—Allows Rhodes community members to report bias-related incidents and microaggressive behaviors related to disability, race, gender identity or expression, color, age, religion, sexual orientation, and national or ethnic origin.