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**CENTENARY  
COLLEGE**  
NEW JERSEY

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**Disability Services Office (DSO)**

**Handbook for Policies and  
Procedures**

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## Section I: Introduction to Centenary College's Disability Services Office

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Disability Services Office (DSO) is to provide a range of reasonable accommodations and support services to students with disabilities. Based on nationally regarded best practices, The Disability Services Office seeks to foster independence and to develop the self-advocacy of students with disabilities. In addition, the office strives to serve as a liaison and resource to the members of the Centenary College community regarding disability issues.

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### Office Hours

Monday through Friday 9 am - 5 pm

Weekend and other appointments made upon request

### Location

Academic Success Center is located in the Harris & Betts Smith Learning Center

### Contact information

[dso@centenarycollege.edu](mailto:dso@centenarycollege.edu)

Fax: 908-979-4277

### DSO Staff

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## Rights and Responsibilities

### I. The Disability Services Office (DSO)

The Disability Services Office has the right to:

- ✓ Request and receive current disability documentation that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- ✓ Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if the documentation demonstrates that the request is not warranted or the student fails to provide appropriate documentation;
- ✓ Select among equally effective accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- ✓ Refuse accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services that impose a fundamental alteration of a College program or activity;

The Disability Services Office has the responsibility to:

- ✓ Provide information to students with disabilities in accessible formats upon request;
- ✓ Ensure that courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities are available and usable in the most integrated and appropriate settings;
- ✓ Review Application for Accommodations and Services to determine eligibility for services and nature of accommodations;
- ✓ Provide or arrange reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and auxiliary aids and services;
- ✓ Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication, and to disclose such information only when permitted by law;
- ✓ Serve as a liaison between students and faculty;
- ✓ Serve as a resource on disability issues for the Centenary campus community.

### II. Faculty

Faculty members have the right to:

- ✓ Identify and establish standards for courses and academic programs;
- ✓ Verify through the Disability Services Office the eligibility for and nature of accommodations before provision of accommodations occurs;
- ✓ Request assistance and resources from the Office of Disability Services

Faculty members are responsible for:

- ✓ Evaluating students solely on the basis of their academic performance;
- ✓ Working with the student and the Disability Services Office to ensure the provision of reasonable accommodations;
- ✓ Fostering an accessible learning environment to all learners;
- ✓ Addressing concerns about disability accommodations with the Disability Services Office

### III. Students

Students with disabilities at Centenary College have the right to:

- ✓ Equal access to courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities offered through the college;
- ✓ Equal opportunity to learn;
- ✓ Request reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services;
- ✓ Information in accessible formats.

Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:

- ✓ Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities;
- ✓ Identify themselves as individuals with disabilities when requesting accommodations and seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary;
- ✓ Document their disability according to established guidelines and demonstrate how disability substantially limits their participation in courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities;
- ✓ Follow published procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.

Students are advised to:

- ✓ Meet with each of their professors to discuss the testing and academic accommodations that they anticipate needing for each class;
- ✓ Self disclose their disability status to faculty and staff when appropriate;
- ✓ Exercise self-advocacy to meet their disability related needs.

## Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504

### The Rehabilitation Act of 1973-Section 504:

Provides a 'right of access' statute to people with disabilities. Section 504 provides persons with disabilities the right of access into, or to derive benefits from, any program or activity receiving federal financial funding.

### The ADA:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is civil rights legislation that affects some 54 million Americans with Disabilities. This federal law provides a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The ADA is regarded as the most sweeping civil rights legislation since The Civil Rights Act of 1964. The ADA protects the civil rights of people with disabilities by ensuring equal access to employment, state and local government agencies, transportation, public and private facilities, and telecommunications.

### Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states in part that . . .

"No otherwise qualified handicapped individual...shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

### Disabled Individual:

Both the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 define a "disabled individual" as anyone who:

1. has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working, or
2. has a record of such impairment; or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment.

## Section II: Everything You Need to Know about Reasonable Accommodations

### Defining Reasonable Accommodations

- Reasonable accommodations are appropriate adjustments to programs, policy, and practice that make aspects of the college experience accessible and provide equal opportunities to Centenary College students with disabilities. An equal opportunity means a chance to attain the same level of performance or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to a similarly situated student without disabilities.
- Students are not charged for the cost incurred in providing reasonable accommodations, including auxiliary aids and services (e.g., sign language interpreters, note-taking services, text conversion to alternative accessible formats, audio or video tapes, etc.)
- To determine reasonable accommodations, DSO may seek information from appropriate college personnel regarding essential standards for courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities. The director makes the final determinations of reasonable accommodations in collaboration with the student and faculty as warranted.
- Reasonable accommodations are determined by examining:
  1. Environmental barriers limiting curricular, facility, or programmatic access.
  2. Whether or not the student has access to the course, program, service, activity, or facility without an accommodation;
  3. The range of possible accommodations that might remove the barriers;
  4. Whether or not essential elements of the course, program, service, activity, or facility are compromised by the accommodations.

### Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Accommodations

- Students must follow procedures for requesting accommodations:
  1. Complete Application for Accommodations and Services.
  2. Submit Disability Documentation.
  3. Sign Consent of Release of Information form.
- Students must allow at least two weeks for the Disability Services Office to review all requests for accommodations.

**It must be noted that Centenary College and the Disability Services Office reserve the right to deny requests for services or accommodations while the receipt of appropriate disability documentation is pending.**

## Examples of Reasonable Accommodations

- Examples of some of the most frequently requested accommodations include:
  - Extended time for quizzes and exams
  - Distraction-reduced environment for exams
  - Note-taking services
  - Permission to tape record lectures
  - Textbooks on tape or in large-print

### Spell-Check Devices, Calculators and Reasonable Accommodations

- Spell-check devices and calculators can certainly be helpful to everyone - both people with and without disabilities. However, the use of these tools is considered a **reasonable accommodation only under very specific circumstances**.

#### Spell-Check Devices:

DSO will only approve use of a **spell-check device** as a reasonable accommodation for an exam if:

1. Students' disability documentation indicates specific cognitive difficulties that would cause them problems with spelling **and**
2. The ability to spell words accurately is not considered an important part of what an exam is designed to test - as determined by the professor and/or the academic department

#### Calculators:

DSO will only approve the use of a calculator as a reasonable accommodation for an exam if:

1. Students' disability documentation indicates specific cognitive difficulties that would cause them problems with arithmetic comprehension or computation **and**
2. The ability to add, subtract, multiply, or divide accurately is not considered an important part of what an exam is designed to test as determined by the professor and/or the academic department.

#### It is important to note:

1. Given these very specific conditions, it is entirely possible for use of a spell checker or calculator to be allowable for some exams, and not allowable for others.
2. DSO will consider requests for use of a calculator and a spell-checker on a case-by-case basis.
3. DSO will not approve use of these tools as reasonable accommodations when using them provides students with an unfair advantage or undermines academic standards.

### Notification of Eligibility for Accommodations

- A letter is sent to the student stating either approval or denial of accommodations. The approval letter will list the accommodation(s) to which the student is entitled. The letter of denial will explain the appeals process should the student choose to exercise this option.

### Changes in Your Accommodations Needs

- Students are entitled to request additional accommodations or academic adjustments during the course of the semester, or at any time during their tenure at Centenary College. Students are also entitled to request modifications to the nature of the accommodations. Students must work with the DSO to determine the appropriate changes to accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services. **The office should be contacted at earliest indication of emerging accommodation needs. Students must allow at least two weeks for the coordination and provision of new accommodations or modifications to existing accommodations.**

## Section III: Documentation

### General Guidelines for Disability Documentation

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA allows colleges to require disability documentation to verify the need for accommodations. The Disability Services Office (DSO) established the following guidelines for documentation:

1. Documentation must be recent in order to assess the current impact on academic functioning. The level of currency required for disability documentation varies according to form of disability and type of documentation required. Please consult with specific disability documentation guidelines, which are available through DSO.
2. Documentation must be comprehensive and establish clear evidence of a significant impact on academic functioning.
3. Documentation must be relevant to requested accommodations.
4. Documentation must be from a medical or other licensed professional.
5. Documentation must be accompanied by a history of reasonable accommodations and a list of academic adjustments.

#### Incomplete Documentation:

- If the original documentation is incomplete or inadequate to determine the extent of the disability or reasonable accommodation(s), Centenary College has the discretion to require additional documentation. The student must bear any cost incurred in obtaining additional information. Please refer to specific documentation guidelines for each type of disability.

#### Missing Documentation:

- When a student does not have the required disability documentation she/he should set up an appointment with the Director of Disability Services for an appropriate referral. Referrals for all types of disability evaluations are available from the Disability Services Office.

**Note: Centenary College reserves the right to deny services or reasonable accommodations while the receipt of appropriate documentation is pending. Students must complete the application process and submit disability documentation before they can receive accommodations and services.**

## Guidelines for Documentation of Learning Disabilities

The following guidelines describe the necessary components of acceptable documentation for students with learning disabilities. Students are encouraged to provide their clinicians with a copy of these guidelines.

1. Testing must involve a comprehensive psycho-educational evaluation. The following areas must be assessed:

**Aptitude:** The Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale Revised (WAIS-R) with subtest scores is the preferred instrument. The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fourth Edition are acceptable.

**Achievement:** Assessment of academic ability in the areas of reading, writing, and math is required. Suggested instruments include: Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery Revised: Tests of Achievement; Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK), or other specific achievement such as The Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. The Wide Range Achievement Test is NOT a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore, is not suitable as a sole measure of achievement.

**Information Processing:** Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short and long term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed) must be assessed. Use of the subtests from the WAIS-R or the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability are also acceptable.

2. Testing must be current: administered within the past three years or after age 18. Because the provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon assessment of the current impact on the student's disabilities on his/her academic performance, it is important to provide recent and appropriate documentation.
3. Testing must state that there is a learning disability. Terms such as "learning problems," "learning differences," "weaknesses," etc. are not the equivalent of a learning disability.
4. Testing must be performed by a qualified evaluator: clinical or educational psychologists, learning disabilities specialists, or physicians known to specialize in learning disabilities. Information about their professional credentials, including licensing and certification, and their areas of specialization must be clearly stated in the report.
5. Dates of testing must be included in the report.
6. Testing must include information about the functional limitations of the student. Assessments should indicate how the student's disability may affect his/her current participation in courses, programs, services, or any other activity of the college.

## Guidelines for Documentation of Psychiatric Disabilities / Psychological Disorders

Psychiatric disability / psychological disorder documentation must include all of the following elements:

**Currency of documentation:** Documentation must be current, reflecting evaluations conducted within the past year.

**The evaluation must be performed by a qualified individual:** The assessment must be provided by a licensed professional qualified to make the evaluation, such as a psychologist or a psychiatrist. An assessment from a general practitioner typically does not suffice.

### **Documentation should be comprehensive and must include the following:**

1. **Current treatment and medications:** Documentation should include any counseling, specific therapies, current prescribed medications and any side-effects that would compromise academic functioning.
2. **Specific diagnosis:** This should not merely refer to symptoms and should correspond to a specific DSM-IV category.
3. **Impact on academic functioning:** Documentation should specify how an individual's psychological disorder impacts upon his or her performance in the academic context.
4. **Recommendations for academic accommodations:** Documentation should recommend reasonable academic adjustments that would grant students with psychiatric disabilities equal access to programs and curricula.

## Guidelines for Documentation of Physical Disabilities, Neurological Conditions, or Mobility Impairments

Students requesting accommodations on the basis of mobility, systemic, or disease-related disabilities must provide documentation consisting of:

- An identification of the disabling condition(s).
- An assessment of the functionally limiting manifestations of the condition(s) relevant to academic functioning or participation in any aspect of college life. All assessments must be performed by licensed medical professionals qualified to diagnose and treat the condition.

## Guidelines for Documentation of Sensory Impairments

### Hearing Impairments and Deafness

Students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing must provide documentation consisting of:

- An audiological evaluation and/or audiogram; **and**
- An interpretation of the functional implications of the diagnostic data.

### Visual Impairments and Blindness

Students requesting accommodations on the basis of low vision or blindness must provide documentation consisting of:

- An ocular assessment or evaluation from an ophthalmologist, or a low-vision evaluation of residual visual function, where appropriate; **and**
- An assessment of functionally limiting manifestations of the disabling condition.

### Speech Impairments

Students requesting accommodations on the basis of a speech/language disability must provide documentation consisting of:

- A clearly written statement of the disability diagnosed by a qualified professional trained in this area (e.g., physician, speech/language pathologist, neurologist, etc.); **and**
- A summary of the various evaluation tools used in determining the specific disability; **and**
- A summary of present symptoms and how these symptoms affect the student's functioning, specifically in relation to the postsecondary environment.

**Additionally, all documentation should be current, i.e. within the last three years.**

## Guidelines for Documentation of Substance Abuse Disorders

Students requesting accommodations on the basis of a substance abuse disorder must provide documentation consisting of:

- Verification of completion or current participation in substance/alcohol abuse program that specifies the nature of the addiction, the treatment course, and plans for continued treatment. The documentation should indicate the side effects of any medications.
- Substance abuse documentation from a medical or other licensed professional, such as a psychologist.

## Guidelines for Documentation of ADD and ADHD

Students requesting accommodations on the basis of attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) must provide documentation by a professional who has undergone comprehensive training and has relevant experience in differential diagnosis and the full range of psychiatric disorders - e.g., licensed clinical psychologist, neurophysiologist, psychiatrist, and other relevantly trained medical doctors. The documentation must include:

- Evidence of early impairment. The condition must have been exhibited in childhood in more than one setting.
- Evidence of current impairment. A history of the individual's presenting attentional symptoms and evidence of current impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behaviors.
- Neuropsychological or psycho-educational assessments needed to determine the current impact of the disorder on the individual's ability to function in an academic setting.
- A specific psychological diagnosis as per the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual - IV (DSM-IV). Symptoms of hyperactivity/impulsivity, which were present in childhood, and the current symptoms, which have been present for at least the past six months and, which impair functioning in two or more settings (e.g., school, work, home) must also be identified.
- A clinical summary which: (a) indicates the substantial limitations to major life activities posed by the disability, (b) describes the extent to which these limitations would impact the academic context for which accommodations are being requested.

**Additionally, documentation must be current, i.e. within two years.**

## Guidelines for Documentation of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Students requesting accommodations on the basis of a traumatic brain injury (TBI) must provide documentation by a neurophysiologist/neurologist. The documentation must include:

- A thorough neuropsychological evaluation which includes assessment of the areas of attention, visual perception/visual reasoning, language, academic skills, memory/learning, executive functioning, sensory, motor, and emotional status.
- Evidence of current impairment. A history of individual's presenting symptoms and evidence of behaviors that significantly impairs functioning.
- A clinical summary which: (a) indicates the substantial limitations to major life activities posed by the disability, (b) describes the extent to which these limitations would impact the academic context for which accommodations are being requested.

## Guidelines for Documentation for Chronic Medical and Other Conditions

Nonspecific disabling injuries include but are not limited to all chronic health conditions (asthma, diabetes, sickle cell anemia, etc.), orthopedic injuries or impairments or any other condition which substantially limits a student's participation academically.

Students requesting accommodations on the basis of other nonspecific disabling injuries and conditions must provide documentation consisting of:

- Medical or other licensed professional describing the nature of the condition including information pertaining to the history, expected course of treatment, and limitations resulting from the condition or treatments.
- Documentation must be **recent** in order to assess the current impact on academic functioning. The recency of documentation needed is assessed on a case by case basis by the Director of Disability Services.
- Documentation must be comprehensive and establish clear evidence of a significant impact on academic functioning.
- Documentation must be relevant to requested accommodations.

## Guidelines for Documentation of Asperger's Syndrome

Asperger's Syndrome documentation must include all of the following elements:

**Currency of documentation:** Documentation must be current, reflecting evaluations within the last three (3) years.

**The evaluation must be performed by a qualified individual:** The assessment must be provided by a licensed professional qualified to make the evaluation, such as a developmental pediatrician or a developmental medical doctor. Assessment from a general practitioner typically does not suffice.

**Documentation should be comprehensive and must include the following:**

1. **Testing must involve a comprehensive psycho-educational evaluation.** The following must be assessed and must include a review of academic record:

**Aptitude:** The Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale Revised (WAIS-R) with subtest scores is the preferred instrument. The Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fourth Edition are acceptable.

**Achievement:** Assessment of academic ability in the areas of reading, writing, and math is required. Suggested instruments include: Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery Revised: Tests of Achievement; Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK), or other specific achievement such as The Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL), Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests Revised, or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test. The Wide Range Achievement Test is NOT a comprehensive measure of achievement and therefore, is not suitable as a sole measure of achievement

**Information Processing:** Specific areas of information processing (e.g., short and long term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed) must be assessed. Use of the subtests from the WAIS-R or the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability are acceptable.

2. **Specific diagnosis:** - Comprehensive neuropsychological examination. This should not merely refer to symptoms and should correspond to a specific DSM-IV category
3. **Current social/emotional functioning** if not in neuropsychological evaluation, then by a separate evaluator

**All documentation should be current, i.e. within the last three years.**

## Section IV: Using Accommodations and Disability Services at Centenary College

### Testing Accommodations

- Accommodative testing allows the student to take his/her exams in an alternative environment, or in an alternative format. Accommodative testing does not alter the content of the exam. Students with disabilities are held to the course requirements and college's academic standards.

### Scheduling Testing Accommodations

- Students must consult their professors about the provision of testing accommodations. Some professors will choose to administer exams themselves with the required accommodations. Other professors will prefer that DSO administer exams with accommodations. It is important that students confirm with each professor specifically how exams with reasonable accommodations will be arranged.

### Taking Exams at Centenary

- Return completed *Examination Release Form* to DSO **no later than three days prior to the examination date**.
- Schedule day and time for exam. If the exam is re-scheduled by the professor, notify DSO to reschedule.
- If you are sick or unable to take the exam at the scheduled time, DSO requires that you: (1) provide a doctor's note to the office and (2) speak to the professor in order to schedule a make-up exam. You **must** contact DSO prior to your scheduled exam time if you are going to miss the exam. Make-up exams are only given with permission of the professor.

### Testing Accommodations Agreement

- Students eligible for testing accommodations are required to complete and sign the *Testing Accommodations Agreement* (Appendix I) prior to using this accommodation. The Testing Accommodation Agreement outlines the student's responsibilities for each examination.

### Day of DSO Exam Instructions

- Report to DSO at the scheduled time of exam.
- Review format of the examination with the proctor.
- Ask questions directly to proctor. If proctor is unable to answer questions, the staff will arrange for you to ask questions of your professor (when possible).
- Take examination according to approved testing accommodations.
- Return completed exam to proctor. All scrap paper and worksheets must be returned with the exam.

## **A Final Word on Testing and Academic Integrity**

Students registered with the DSO are expected to uphold all of the college's academic integrity policies and abide by the student Academic Code of Conduct. DSO is committed to upholding these policies. Any actions that compromise academic integrity, or Centenary College's Academic Code of Conduct (2004-2005 Catalog, p.33-34) will be referred to the Academic Review Board for appropriate disciplinary action. Furthermore, students who engage in acts of academic dishonesty while receiving testing accommodations through the DSO risk a suspension of their testing privileges through the office or other disciplinary actions.

Under the Academic Code of Conduct, any form of cheating is prohibited.

## Section V: Scheduling Accommodations for Academic Assistance

### Priority/ Early Registration

- Early Registration is available to students with disabilities determined according to documented need. This accommodation allows students with disabilities to register for classes for the next semester during the early registration period regardless of the other early registration requirements.
- Students are only eligible for early registration if they have been cleared by the Bursar, Registrar, Admissions Office, Library, and Health Services Office. In other words, students who have holds (impounds) on their records are not able to register until those impounds have been cleared.
- Students must be advised before Early Registration. Academic Advisement occurs in the student's department or the Transfer Office or the College Academic Success Center. Students who have not been advised are **not** eligible for Early Registration.

### Notetakers

If a student with a disability is eligible for a note-taker, DSO arranges for the student to receive a copy of a classmate's notes **or** for a note-taker to be assigned to the class. This is determined by the Director of Disability Services according to disability documentation.

- Students who need note-taking services must notify DSO **at the time of registration**. Students must complete the *Request for Note-takers* Form when requesting note-takers.
- Student must inform DSO of any changes to their class schedule. Students must allow at least one week for note-taking services to begin in any new classes or new sections.
- Students reserve the right to monitor the quality of notes. If a student is not satisfied with the note-taking services, they must contact DSO immediately. It may be requested that the student must put his or her complaint in writing. When appropriate, DSO will arrange for a different note-taker.
- Students should find a classmate who is willing to serve as a back-up note-taker in the event that the regularly scheduled note-taker is out sick.
- Students must inform DSO if they are planning to miss class. Note-taking services are not a substitute for class attendance. Note-taking services are not provided when the student is not in class.

## Books-on-CD/ Audio-Books

Students who require their textbooks in alternative audio format (on CD) as an accommodation must adhere to the following procedures.

- Register with *Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB & D)* and/or the *Library of Congress*.
- Students must complete the Request for Books-on-Tape Form. Students should notify DSO **at the time of registration**. Late notification will result in a delay in the acquisition of books on CD. Students must provide the title, author, edition, and ISBN number of text which they are requesting in an alternative format.
- When books on CD arrive, DSO will notify you. Books on CD are available for pickup Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm or by appointment. Books on CD **will not** be mailed to students home.
- Books on CD **must** be returned at the end of each semester to the DSO. The cost of any books not returned will be billed to the student.
- The eligible student is responsible for obtaining his or her own software reading program or player enabled to read RFB & D compact disks. DSO has a limited supply of RFB & D enabled software programs available for on-campus use. These programs can be reserved at DSO based on availability.
- In some circumstances when books on tape are unavailable through *RFB & D and/or the Library of Congress*, Kurzweil reading software is also available through the DSO.

### Books, College Publications, or class materials in Alternate Formats.

- Book, college publications and class materials are available in large print, audio format or in Braille upon request.
- Students must notify DSO of their need for materials in alternate format. Requests take at least five days to fulfill. Requests for textbooks in large print must be made **each semester**. You must notify DSO **at the time of registration**. Late notification will result in a delay in the acquisition of textbooks in large print.

## Sign Language Interpreters

Sign language interpreting services are arranged for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Students must adhere to the following protocols in order to receive interpreting services:

- Notify DSO **at the time of registration** of interpreting needs or interpreters to be assigned to their classes.
- Student must complete the Request for Sign-Language Interpreting Services Form for all sign-language interpreting needs.
- When a student who utilizes interpreters is unable to attend class due to illness or other reasons, they must notify DSO at least **24 hours** in advance. At least 24 hours advance notice is required to cancel interpreting services without a penalty. Students who develop a pattern of missing classes without notifying DSO may be held responsible for interpreting costs.
- Students must notify DSO of class scheduling changes, including room location changes, course selection changes, or of class time changes.

## Assistive Learning Devices

- Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) are available at DSO and can be obtained Monday through Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. ALDs can be checked out by the student for daily or weekly use. ALDs are available for use in classes and other campus programs and events. Students will be billed for any damages or lost ALDs (example: Williams FM System)

## Section VI: Meeting Your Campus Accessibility Needs

### Classrooms

DSO arranges for classroom relocation for students with disabilities when appropriate.

Students must:

- Notify DSO of their classroom accessibility needs at the time of registration.
- Students must provide information regarding their limitations with:
  - Desks
  - Seating
  - Stairs and/or elevators
  - Specific buildings on campus

### Attending Campus Events

- Accommodations for campus events are coordinated primarily by the department sponsoring the event with assistance provided by DSO. Students must notify the sponsoring department of accommodation needed to attend the event (examples: sign language interpreters for a theatrical production or accessible transportation for off-campus trip sponsored by Centenary College.)

### Service Animals Policy

- In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are permitted in college facilities. Technically speaking, a service animal means any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Examples of the functions of services animals include but are not limited to: guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing, providing minimal rescue or protection work, pulling a wheelchair or fetching dropped items. Therapy or companion animals are not service animals and are not covered under the ADA. To work on campus, a service animal must be specifically trained to perform a service function. Furthermore, the animal should wear a harness, cape, identification tag or other gear that readily identifies its working status. Service animals whose behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others may be excluded regardless of training or certification.

## Section VII: Assistive Technology

### What is Assistive Technology?

- Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, or product system used to increase, maintain, or improve access for individuals with disabilities.

### What are some of the Assistive Technologies that are available?

- **Voice recognition system** (Dragon Naturally Speaking/Voice Express) - allows students to write by simply speaking to a computer system that is programmed to recognize their voices. **Particularly helpful to: students with motor disabilities and students with learning disabilities.**
- **Screen readers** (Jaws/Magic) - allow students who are unable to see a traditional computer monitor to access the screen via a voice output system that literally reads the contents to users. **Particularly helpful to: blind and low-vision students.**
- **Screen enlargers** (Zoom Text/Magic) - allow students who have difficulty seeing screen contents on a standard computer monitor to see the computer by enlarging the screen up to 16 times. **Particularly helpful to: low-vision students.**
- **Braille Translation Software** (Duxbury) - allows for the conversion of text to Braille using a scanner and Braille printer. **Particularly helpful to: blind students.**
- **Kurzweil Omni 3000 Reading System** - assists students whose disabilities affect their reading by simultaneously reading text out loud and highlighting each spoken word on a computer display. Students can have the system pause at any time and using its pull-down menus, have instant access to dictionary, thesaurus, grammar check, and note-taking. Students can also use the system's scanner, voice-output and recording capabilities to create books-on-tape. **Particularly helpful to: students with learning disabilities and blind/low- vision students.**
- **Inspiration**- software that assists students in organizing ideas for essays and papers using symbolic, graphical displays. **Particularly helpful to: students with learning disabilities.**

### Where can I find assistive technology at Centenary College?

Centenary College provides laptops to full time students. If you need assistive technology please contact the Director of Disability Services. Technical assistance and help is available from the DSO staff or the Centenary College Helpdesk. Students should contact DSO in order to make an appointment.

### **Centenary College's Commitment to Assistive Technology:**

- Assistive technology is a rapidly evolving field, with innovative AT solutions constantly emerging. In the effort to provide students with the most effective AT solutions, Centenary College is committed to consistently upgrading its AT resources. Please periodically check with DSO to learn about its latest improvements to Centenary College's AT resources.

### **Requesting AT in classrooms/lab: When you need AT in your classroom:**

- Students must complete and submit the *Request for Assistive Technology in the Classroom/Labs* Form (Appendix I).
- Students are advised to submit these requests at the time of registration and must allow three weeks for assistive technology to be installed.

## Section VIII: Talking to Your Professors

### Talking to Your Professors

Although there are more students with disabilities in postsecondary education today than ever before, it is very possible that there are situations in which the college instructor has had little prior experience with students with disabilities. Also, the student does not often know how to advocate for himself/herself or to express his/her needs.

DSO recommends the following strategies to use when talking to your professors for the first time about your disability and need for accommodations:

- Be prepared! Practice what you are going to say and be prepared to discuss your abilities (and your disabilities) as well as accommodations you are requesting. Bring your accommodation letter from DSO with you.
- Don't procrastinate! Make an appointment to talk with your instructor(s) within the first two weeks of each semester. Adjustments and accommodations need to be planned as early as possible, especially in regards to testing accommodations.
- Take it with you! Bring your Accommodation Letter from DSO. Remember the Accommodation Letter verifies your need for accommodations and your registration with DSO. YOU must request these letters at the beginning of each semester.
- Problems? When problems arise, contact the Director of DSO as soon as possible. In most situations, you and the instructor will work out the provision of accommodations in a way that is agreeable to all parties involved. If you have difficulties working this out, contact the DSO.

## 10 Tips for Self-Advocacy

1. Know and understand your rights and responsibilities
2. Ask questions whenever you need clarification
3. Repeat a question until it is satisfactorily answered
4. Keep a "paper trail" of all written communication regarding your education. It's appropriate to request copies of all records and documentation
5. Remember that you are an equal partner in your education
6. Let people know that you intend to work to resolve issues
7. Learn all you can about your disability: needs, strengths, and weaknesses
8. Know what resources are available and use them
9. Know who the key people are. Find the right person with whom to talk, and try all avenues.
10. Praise and thank people when appropriate

## Section IX: Confidentiality and Grievance Procedures

### Policy on Confidentiality

#### General Rule:

The Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) regulates disclosure of disability documentation and records maintained by DSO. DSO requires prior written consent by the student before DSO may release disability documentation or records to any third party.

#### Exception to the Rule:

Under FERPA, DSO is permitted to release information to any school official who has a "legitimate educational interest."

#### What does this mean?

Professors or other school officials, such as tutors, may request information about the impact of a student's disability on their ability to learn. DSO will only share information with other school officials when appropriate and will carefully balance a student's request for confidentiality and the request for additional, relevant information about the student. DSO seeks to preserve the student's wish to keep their disability information and status confidential.

#### Other Student's Rights under FERPA:

FERPA also allows students to inspect and review their files maintained by DSO. Students have the right to challenge any information contained in the files that is incorrect or misleading and request an amendment to this misinformation.

## Section 504/ADA Grievance Procedure for Students with Disabilities

- Centenary College has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794). Section 504 states, in part, that "no otherwise qualified handicapped [sic] individual ... shall, solely by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance . . . ."
- Complaints should be addressed to Christopher Selena, Director of Disability Services, (908) 852-1400 x2251 who has been designated to coordinate all ADA & Section 504 compliance efforts;
- A complaint may be filed in writing or verbally;
- The complaint should contain the name and address of the person filing it, and briefly describe the alleged violation of regulations;
- A complaint should be filed within thirty (30) days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation. Processing of allegations of discrimination that occurred before this grievance procedure was in place will be considered on a case-by-case basis;
- An investigation, as may be appropriate, shall follow a filing of a complaint. The college's compliance officer shall conduct the investigation. He may, at his discretion, request to convene an ADA Accessibility Committee in order to assist in completing the investigation;
- A written determination as to the status, validity of the complaint, and a description of the resolution, if any, will be issued by the compliance officer and a copy will be forwarded to the complainant no later than thirty (30) days after its filing. This requirement can be waived at the discretion of the ADA Compliance Committee;
- The ADA & Section 504 coordinator shall maintain the files and records of the college relating to the complaints filed.
- Within ten (10) calendar days of the issuance of the compliance officer's final report, the complainant may appeal the determination. An appeal is taken by filing a written request for review with The Rev. David Jones, Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Engagement and Service (908)852-1400 x4291.
- An appeal must specify the particular substantive and/or procedural basis for the appeal and must be made on grounds other than general dissatisfaction with the proposed disposition. Furthermore, the appeal must be directed only to issues raised in the formal complaint as filed or to procedural errors in the conduct of the grievance procedure itself, and not new issues.

- The Rev. David Jones, Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Engagement and Service, (908) 852-1400 x4291 will have thirty (30) calendar days to make an investigation and return his/her findings to the complainant, the compliance officer, and if appropriate, to the College's officer whose authority is needed to carry out the disposition.
- The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint filed hereunder will not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of a Section 504 or ADA complaint with the responsible federal agency or department. Using this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.
- These rules will be construed to protect the substantive rights of interested persons, meet appropriate due process standards and assure that Centenary College complies with Section 504 and the ADA and their implementing regulations.

## Important Legal Decisions

It is important for students with disabilities to be familiar with important OCR rulings and/or court cases. The following cases have impacted providing services to students with disabilities in the college setting.

### Disability Documentation

- **Temple University** (OCR Region III, 1999) OCR ruled that Temple University is entitled to seek documentation from qualified professionals to establish diagnosis, functional limitations, ability to benefit and need for accommodation; it may also seek a second opinion at its own expense.
- **Montgomery College** (OCR Region III 1999) OCR ruled that the college generally has no duty to accommodate until receipt of sufficient documentation establishing disability and nature of accommodations warranted.

### Disability Defined

- **el Kouni v. Trustees of Boston University (D. Mass. 2001)** the court ruled that a student diagnosed with clinical anxiety and depression and later with bipolar disorder, which slowed his thought processing and caused "cognitive blunting", is disabled under the ADA and Rehabilitation Act.
- **Saint Vincent's College of Nursing (OCR Region I, 2000)** OCR ruled that a student's test anxiety does not raise to the level of being disabling under the ADA; achievement and intelligence test results were within the average range.

### Processing Accommodation Requests

- **Chesapeake College (OCR Region III, 1996)** OCR upheld the college's policy obligating students to register with disability services office two months prior to semester and request accommodations two weeks in advance of need.

## Test Accommodations

- **Florida Atlantic University** (OCR Region IV, 1997) OCR upheld the practice that students give minimum three days notice of need for testing accommodations and one week notice for exams.
- **Edmonds Community College** (OCR Region X, 1996) OCR upheld the college's refusal to accommodate a student who only provided one hour's notice of disability prior to test.
- **University of California, Santa Cruz** (OCR Region IX, 1999) OCR faulted the university for failing to ensure that test proctors provided student with same level of instruction clarification afforded non-disabled students.
- **Redlands Community College** (OCR Region VI, 1999) OCR ruled that a student with learning disability who receives extended time on tests cannot challenge manner of test administration after receiving final grade.

## Use of Calculator on Exams

- **Hamilton v. City College of the City of New York**, (S.D.N.Y. 2001) Court upheld engineering faculty's refusal to permit use of calculator by student with learning disability on final exam, despite permitting use on previous tests.

## Personal Assistance on Exams

- **Florida Atlantic University** (OCR Region IV, 1997) OCR ruled that providing assistance to help student complete essay exam constituted a personal service not required by Section 504/ADA.

## Altering Test Administration

- **Hoffman v. Contra Costa College**, 21 Fed. Appx 748 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2001) Court ruled that the college provided reasonable accommodation to student with multiple sclerosis by offering her extended time, a quiet testing location, and use of formula sheets; college is under no obligation to require professor to permit student to access notes and other materials during examination. Nor is the college obligated to locate a professor who would honor student request.
- **Pima Community College** (OCR Region VIII, 1998) OCR upheld professor's refusal to allow student to take open book exam which defeated exam purpose of measuring recall, despite physician's recommendation based on student's poor memory occasioned by learning disability.

### **Course Substitution**

- **Parkland College** (IL, Case No. 05-01-2034 (OCR Region V 2001 ) (upholding two year college's requirement that all students seeking to transfer to four year institutions take mathematics coursework, despite student's document learning disability in math)

### **Note-taking Assistance**

- **University of Massachusetts** (OCR Region, 1998) (University practice of limiting provision of note-taking services to when student attends class does not violate Section 504 or the ADA when class attendance is deemed essential)

## Section X: Campus and Community Resources for People with Disabilities

### New Jersey Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (NJ DVR) and Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH)

- DVR and CVBH are New Jersey State agencies, authorized by the Rehabilitation Act to provide vocational and educational services to students with disabilities.
- Eligible students may receive the following services from these vocational rehabilitation agencies:
  - Vocational assessment
  - College tuition support
  - Funding for books
  - Funding for transportation
  - Assistive technology
  - Mobility training
  - Vocational counseling
  - Job placement services
  - Equipment
- Students with disabilities are encouraged to apply for services from these agencies. Contact information is listed on the following pages.
- More information about NJ DVR can be found at [www.nj.gov/labor/dvrs](http://www.nj.gov/labor/dvrs)
- More information about CBVH can be found at [www.ocfs.state.nj.us/main/cbvh](http://www.ocfs.state.nj.us/main/cbvh)

## Section XI: Important Terms to Know:

### Important Terms and Disability Resources to Know

**The Americans with Disabilities Act** --Regarded as the most sweeping civil rights legislation since 1964. Signed July 26, 1990 by President George Bush, it is a federal legislation that protects the civil rights of disabled persons by guaranteeing equal access to employment, state and local government services, public and private transportation, public facilities and private facilities open to the general public, and telephone services.

**Assistive Technology (AT)**--The general term used to describe any item, piece of equipment or software that improves access to computers and technology for students with disabilities. Some examples of assistive technology include screen readers (JAWS) and screen enlargers (Zoom Text)

**CBVH: Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped**--Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) provides rehabilitation services to individuals who are legally blind and reside in New Jersey State. CBVH programs include:

1. Training for Employment
2. Business Enterprise Program
3. Programs for Older Adults
4. Programs for Children Location

**Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**--created by the Civil Rights Act and provides enforcement of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prevents discrimination of the handicapped. Tel: 973.645.6383

**Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Administration (EPVA)**--Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of spinal cord injured/diseased veterans residing primarily in New York, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania and Connecticut. EPVA is a regional chapter of a national association, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since its founding in 1946, EPVA has been operating valuable programs designed to enable its members, as well as other persons with disabilities, to live full and productive lives. Located 346 Broadway, Room 819, NY, NY, 10007. Tel: 212.442.4171.

**Federal Communications Commission (FCC)**--Sets regulations and standards for telephone hearing devices [TDD] and all other communications devices. Tel: 1-888-225-5322.

**Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)** A strategic, but generic, plan of action prepared by a student's teachers which targets various academic, developmental and other deficit areas. This plan is developed for students while they are in elementary and secondary schools. IEP's are **not** used in the college setting.

**International Center for the Disabled (ICD)** Provides employment services for young adults aged 16-21. ICD works with employers, individuals and the school system to increase employment opportunities. 340 East 24<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10010; 212.679.0100.

**Lighthouse International:** A non-for-profit organization that provides services to individuals who are blind or impaired. The Lighthouse provides comprehensive computer training and Orientation and mobility helps people with impaired vision navigate safely within the home, neighborhood and work

**Office of Civil Rights- (OCR)** - 16 Federal Plaza, Room 33-130, New York, 10278; Tel. (212- 246-3313).

**Reasonable Accommodation:** An appropriate adjustment makes something accessible to people with disabilities. Examples include extended-time testing, sign-language interpreting services and assistive technology.

**The Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** Originally passed in 1973 to ensure that individuals with disabilities were provided equal educational and employment opportunities on all levels. This federally mandated law had the greatest impact on ALL post-secondary institutions that received any type of federal funds. Specific to the law, no special or separate program was required. However, all college programs were to be made accessible to students with disabilities, and, in addition, all educational options available to non-disabled students were to be made available to the disabled.

**Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D):** RFB&D provides books on tape. RFB&D's library contains more than 90,000 titles in a broad variety of subjects, from literature and history to math and the sciences, at all academic levels, from kindergarten through post-graduate and professional.