



RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
DEAN OF STUDENTS

## DISABILITY SERVICES FOR STUDENTS (DSS)

# INFORMATION BOOKLET

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

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# 2012 - 2013

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## **WHAT IS DISABILITY SERVICES FOR STUDENTS?**

The Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS) is part of the Dean of Students Office. It was created to assist Rensselaer students with disabilities in achieving full access to the academic programs and extracurricular activities offered on campus.

DSS services for students with documented disabilities may include, but are not limited to, academic modifications, special housing arrangements, exam accommodations, alternate format of printed materials, interpreter services, access to assistive technology, counseling and advocacy. The DSS office also takes part in evaluating and reducing any physical barriers on campus to increase equal access for ALL students obtaining an education at Rensselaer.

\*At the Postsecondary level, students with a documented disability are required to self-identify to the DSS office and provide the required documentation in order to receive support services.

## **WHO CAN BENEFIT?**

Any member of the Rensselaer community, or prospective member, can request assistance or information. If you are a **current** Rensselaer student with a permanent or temporary disability, you may find some of the services described in the next section helpful. If you are a **prospective** student thinking about applying to Rensselaer, we encourage you to contact us early to discuss your plans. If you are a member of the **faculty or staff** at Rensselaer and want to know how to assist a student or someone else you know with a disability, contact us for some useful suggestions. (If you are a Rensselaer employee with a disability, assistance can be arranged through Human Resources.)

## **WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?**

Since each student is a unique individual, we work one-on-one with you to assess your needs and plan services that will help you achieve your goals at Rensselaer. To be eligible, students must identify themselves to Disability Services for Students and must provide documentation of their needs. Services and accommodations are free of charge and include, but are not limited to, the following:

**Notification to Faculty** - With the student's participation, each new academic year (i.e., each fall) DSS will prepare a personalized notification memo for each student to share with his/her instructors, explaining the need for coursework or exam modifications. It is the responsibility of each student to show this memo to their instructors each semester. Students and faculty members work together to make the particular arrangements necessary in each course, with the assistance of DSS if needed.

**Test Accommodations** - Where appropriate to the student's documented needs, accommodations will be provided in the administration of exams, which may include allowance of extra time, provision of readers or taped exams, use of a separate room, and other modifications as necessary to ensure equal opportunity to demonstrate acquired knowledge. These arrangements will be made directly with the professor and will only involve the DSS office if an issue arises between the student and professor. It should be noted that course goals and standards will remain the same, however, for all students.

**Tutoring and Study Skills** – Rensselaer's **Advising and Learning Assistance Center (ALAC)** offers a variety of services to all undergraduates including: free, drop-in tutoring several evenings per week targeting primarily freshmen courses, Learning Assistants (trained upper-class students) who live in freshmen residence halls, and individualized professional services specifically for students with disabilities. The professional staff has expertise in learning and neurological disabilities and can offer individual counseling to improve such skills as reading, note taking, test-taking, and time management. One-to-one, course-specific tutoring can also be arranged by request to the professional staff. As mentioned above, LAs are peer mentors who receive training enabling them to help students directly in their residence halls and to assist them in developing more effective learning skills. A portion of their training involves awareness of students with disabilities. Additionally, to assist students in their study efforts, many back tests and quizzes from previous semesters are available, and students can watch sample online lectures in Calculus and Physics. Also available to all students is a campus program called **The Writing Center**, where experienced staff and graduate assistants will help students review and revise their research papers, lab reports, essays and resumes.

**E-textbooks** – New York state law requires textbook publishers to provide electronic/digital versions of their textbooks to students with disabilities. E-text then can be converted to synthesized voice output to assist or speed up reading. Rensselaer offers the hardware and software for students who want to

create electronic voice files that can be used on a personal laptop (see also Assistive Equipment below). Students are still required by this law to purchase a hard copy of their textbooks, which also requires that all such requests be made through the DSS Office. If an alternate format is needed, please download the appropriate form from the DSS website to complete and submit to the DSS Office at least 2 weeks prior to the start of the course.

**Assistive Equipment: Audio Books** - Where audio formats of books are needed by students whose disability interferes with their reading printed materials, access will be given to the Kurzweil machine located on the lower level of the library. Students may find that they can benefit from using a Kurzweil reading system (particularly for non-technical books) or voice-recognition software for dictating written work. Students can make their own electronic text/voice files for use on their laptops. A workstation, scanner, and specialized software are located in a designated room in the Library. Interested students should contact DSS for more information.

**Note taking** - Rensselaer uses a variety of procedures to provide note taking assistance to students with a demonstrated need. Several options may be available, including online notes and notes provided by the professor or teaching assistant, through volunteer students, or by tape-recording of lectures. Disability Services will assist students in evaluating and implementing these options. Students who request note taking assistance will be encouraged to work with Rensselaer's Learning Assistance Center to determine if their own skills might be improved. Rensselaer will provide paid note takers to students with disabilities only when no effective alternative is available.

**Counseling Services** - Students experiencing the ordinary stresses of college life, as well as more serious personal problems or concerns related to their disability, can receive free counseling services through Rensselaer's Counseling Center, located in the Student Health Center. Community resources, ranging from self-help organizations to nonprofit agencies to private practitioners, are also available at the student's expense, and may be located through the Counseling Center or Disability Services.

**Campus Housing** - Special arrangements for campus housing may be provided, based on individual need, if requested in advance through Disability Services. A form on page 17 of packet will need to be filled out and submitted as directed.

## **WHAT IF I NEED SOMETHING NOT LISTED?**

You may inquire about services without obligation. We will work with on-campus resources or organizations in the local community to arrange the assistance you require, based on your individual needs, to participate fully at Rensselaer. **You must request services** in order to receive assistance from Disability Services for Students. However, you are under no obligation to use services and you may cancel services at any time. We believe you should take an active role in shaping and managing the services you use.

## **IS RENSSELAER'S CAMPUS ACCESSIBLE?**

While Rensselaer appears at first glance to be a difficult campus for persons with mobility limitations, in fact, significant progress has been achieved in the removal of architectural barriers. For example, several dormitories have been modified to provide a choice of living arrangements. Most academic buildings are accessible and most have automatic door openers. (To ensure that classroom locations are accessible and convenient, prior arrangements can be made for classroom scheduling before each semester.) Students with vision loss will find that most elevators have tactile markings. Parking spaces are reserved and marked for disabled drivers in campus parking areas. Individual campus tours focusing on access needs can be arranged at any time by contacting Disability Services for Students.

## **IDENTIFICATION PROCESS**

Students are urged to identify themselves early, and are responsible for making their needs known to Disability Services by contacting the Assistant Dean of Students within DSS, located in the Dean of Students Office, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Academy Hall, 518.276.8197, [dss@rpi.edu](mailto:dss@rpi.edu), to arrange a meeting.

***General*** - All incoming first-year students receive an Enrollment Guide, which includes information about Rensselaer's services for students with disabilities. They are asked to identify voluntarily any special needs they may have by contacting Disability Services for Students. Documentation of their disability will be requested. Transfer students, graduate students, and international students are also asked to identify their needs. Additional opportunities to self-identify are offered on the Student Orientation Registration Form and the Residence Life & Dining Service form. An informational meeting about Disability Services is held for parents and students at every Student Orientation sessions each year.

**Other** - Some students undoubtedly attend Rensselaer without making it known that they have a disability, while others may not be aware of it themselves. Depending on the nature and severity of their disability and the coping strategies they may have devised, their academic performance could range from excellent to failing. In some instances, students who are aware of their disability do not self-identify because they do not believe they will require services, or because they are concerned about discrimination. Rensselaer assures nondiscrimination and encourages all students who know they have a disability to identify themselves, even if they are unsure whether they will need any accommodations. Early planning will help students anticipate and prevent problems. Additionally, students are assured that no services or accommodations will be provided without their full consent and participation.

Some students may suspect that they have a learning disability or ADD but have never been evaluated and, consequently, have no records or documentation. These students may be referred to outside resources for an assessment, at the student's expense, and services may be provided on a provisional basis pending the outcome of their assessment. Rensselaer does not offer diagnostic evaluations on campus but can provide referral information.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

All students with diagnosed disabilities who request services must provide documentation of their disability. Students with learning or neurological disabilities are required to provide documentation, often referred to as a psycho-educational or neurological assessment (pages 8-12), from a qualified professional, which verifies their diagnosis and supports their request for academic accommodations. Individuals with sensory, physical, psychological or other health impairments are required to have a licensed professional fill out the form provided on pages 13-14 or provide written documentation in the form of a medical report or a letter detailing the disability and the recommended educational accommodations, including any tests conducted with results that support the diagnosis. *While helpful as additional documentation, a "504 Plan" or "IEP" often does not always include a psycho educational assessment and therefore will not be accepted on its own.* Depending on their request for accommodations, some students may be required to submit additional relevant information. Rensselaer recommends that documentation be prepared in accordance with the standards issued by the Educational Testing Service, which administers the SAT exams. *(For copies of these documentation standards, please*

*contact your high school guidance department, or go to [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) and follow the link to Test Takers with Disabilities.)*

Students are encouraged to complete a full assessment prior to attending Rensselaer, preferably in the senior year of high school. It is strongly recommended that individuals who are 17 years of age or older be tested using diagnostic instruments normed for adults. Parents may wish to request this assessment as part of the student's "transition planning" in their senior year. For students entering directly from high school, we cannot accept an assessment that is more than three years old. All documentation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and students may be required to submit additional paperwork if needed.

**Documentation Guidelines for Rensselaer students with Learning Disabilities requesting services under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended, August, 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

The student's documentation **must** indicate that the disability **substantially limits** some major life activity, including **learning**.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that documentation is appropriate to **verify eligibility** and to **support requests** for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids.

**1) Testing must be comprehensive.**

To be included in this assessment:

- **The Diagnostic Interview**

Because learning disabilities are frequently manifested during childhood, historical information of learning difficulties in elementary and secondary education must be included. The diagnostic interview, by a qualified examiner, must include relevant background information to support the diagnosis. Such information includes:

- Developmental history
- Academic history, including prior standardized testing reports of classroom academic performance classroom reports of behavior notable trends in academic performance
- Family history

- Psychosocial history
  - Medical history (Absence of medical basis for the present symptoms)
  - History, if any, of prior psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy
  - Discussion of any dual diagnosis of alternative or co-existing mood, behavioral, neurological and/or personality disorders
  - A discussion of the presenting learning problems
- **The Neuropsychological or Psychoeducational Evaluation**  
 The neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation for the diagnosis of a specific learning disability must be submitted on letterhead of the qualified professional, and **it must provide clear and specific evidence of a learning disability.** It is not acceptable to administer one test, nor is it acceptable to base the diagnosis on only one of several subtests. Objective evidence of a **substantial limitation to learning** must be provided.

Minimally, domains to be addressed must include the following:

#### **a. Aptitude**

**A complete aptitude battery is required with all subtests and standard scores.** This may include, but is not limited to, the following: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised; Woodcock-Johnson Psychological Battery Revised; Test of Cognitive Ability; The Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale: Fourth Edition

**NOTE:** The Slosson Intelligence Test-Revised and the Kaufman Adult Intelligence Test do not constitute adequate intelligence test measures.

#### **b. Achievement**

**A complete achievement battery is required with all subtests and standard scores.** The battery may include current levels of academic functioning in reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics, and written language. Acceptable instruments include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)

OR specific achievement tests such as:

- Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL-2)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised
- Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test

**NOTE:** The Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised (WRAT-R) is not a comprehensive measure of achievement and is not acceptable if used as the sole measure of achievement. The Nelson-Denny Test is not an appropriate diagnostic measure of reading achievement. It is a useful screening instrument when administered under standardized conditions.

### **c. Information Processing**

**Specific areas of information processing must be assessed.**

These areas include, but are not limited to:

- short and long term memory
- sequential memory
- auditory and visual perception/processing
- processing speed
- executive functioning
- motor ability

Acceptable instruments include, but are not limited to:

- Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-3 (DTLA-3)
- Information from subtests on the WAIS-R
- Information from the subtests of the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability
- Information from the subtests of other instruments relevant to the presenting problem(s)

### **2) Testing must be current.**

In most cases, this means testing that has been conducted in the last three years. Because the provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon assessment of the **current impact** of the student's disabilities **on his/her academic performance**, it is in the student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation.

In the case of adults tested after age 21, testing within a five-year period can be accepted. In the case of a graduate student or continuing education student, documentation of accommodations from a previous institution of higher education will be considered.

**3) The report must include a specific diagnosis. Individual “learning styles,” learning differences,” and “academic problems” in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability.**

The nature and severity of the functional limitation(s) must be supported by the test data, academic history, anecdotal and clinical observations that may include the student’s level of motivation, study skills, and other non-cognitive factors. **These findings must support the fact that the individual’s functional limitations are due to the stated disabilities.**

**4) Actual test scores must be provided.**

Standard scores must be provided for all normed measures. Percentiles are also acceptable; grade equivalents are not acceptable unless standard scores and/or percentiles are also included. The assessment must show evidence of discrepancies and intra-individual differences. The particular profile of the student’s strengths and weaknesses must provide a rationale for the accommodations that are recommended.

**5) Tests used to document eligibility must be technically sound.**

The tests used must be reliable, valid and standardized with **an adult population**. The test findings should document **both** the nature and severity of the learning disabilities.

**6) A description of requested accommodations including the rationale must be provided.**

The diagnostic report **must include specific recommendations** regarding the curriculum, as well as testing considerations. A detailed explanation must be provided as to why each accommodation is recommended and should be correlated to specific test results or clinical observations. If any accommodation or auxiliary aid was provided in the past, it should be discussed, including information about specific conditions under which the accommodations were used

(e.g. standardized testing, final exams, national board examination) and whether or not they benefitted the student.

For example, if the diagnosed condition is a learning disability, what is the processing disorder and what is the relationship between the disorder and the requested accommodation?

Any school plan (IEP or 504 plan) is not sufficient in and of itself, but it can be included as part of a more comprehensive assessment battery as described in this document.

**If no prior accommodations have been provided**, the qualified professional and/or student should include a detailed explanation as to why no accommodations were used in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.

## **7) A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation.**

Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of specific learning disabilities must be qualified to do so. Experience working with an adult or older adolescent population is essential.

The name, title, date(s) of testing, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification (e.g. licensed psychologist) as well as areas of specialization, employment and state in which the individual practices should be clearly stated. For example, the following professionals would generally be considered qualified to evaluate specific learning disabilities provided they have training in learning disabilities:

- clinical or educational psychologists
- neuropsychologists
- medical doctors known to specialize in specific learning disability conditions
- school psychologists/learning disability specialists/educational diagnosticians

Use of diagnostic terminology indicating a specific learning disability by someone whose training is not consistent with the above criteria does not meet the eligibility requirements. All reports must be typed and otherwise legible.



**Documentation of a Psychological or Medical Disability**

This form is provided in the interest of assuring that evaluation reports are comprehensive in documenting eligibility for students who seek accommodations and/or services for a psychological or medical disability. **Please fill out the form completely.** If you prefer, instead of using the form, you may write a brief report or letter on letterhead, as long as the report includes the same requested information. Any questions should be directed to Mark Smith, Dean of Students, at 518.276.6266.

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Diagnostic Statement describing the disability.** Provide a clear diagnostic statement (and DSM-IV-TR or ICD-10 diagnostic code/s, if appropriate) that describes how the condition was diagnosed, provides information on the functional impact, and details the typical progression or prognosis of the condition.

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**II. A description of the diagnostic methodology used.** Include a description of the diagnostic criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests and dates of administration, as well as a clinical narrative, observation, and specific results. Diagnostic methods that are congruent with the particular disability and current professional practices are recommended.

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**III. A description of the current functional limitations.** Information on how the disabling condition(s) currently impacts the individual is necessary for both establishing a disability and identifying possible accommodations. It should identify the major life function that is being substantially limited.

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**IV. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability.** Include statement on expected changes in the functional impact of the disability over time and context. If the condition is not stable, information on interventions for exacerbations (including the individual's own strategies) and recommended timelines for re-evaluation are helpful.

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**V. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications.**

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**VI. Recommendations for accommodations.** Recommended accommodations and services must be logically related to the functional limitations.

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**Certifying Qualified Evaluator(s):** (Qualified evaluators are defined as licensed individuals who are qualified to evaluate and diagnose psychiatric or medical disabilities or who may serve as members of the diagnostic team. **Diagnoses of psychiatric or medical disabilities documented by family members will not be accepted.**

License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ State of Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed/Typed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL DOCUMENTATION WILL BE HELD IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE**

**PLEASE SUBMIT TO:**

Mark Smith, Dean of Students, Disability Services for Students  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 110 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Troy, NY 12180 | **Fax:** 518-276-4839

## **Special Housing Assignments/Housing Waivers**

In instances when Residence Life is informed of extenuating circumstances that require a special housing requirement or waiver, this application form may be used to request a waiver or specific facility needs or assignment to a particular part of campus. Needs may include, but are certainly not limited to:

### **Medical Examples:**

- Student has a temporary disability and no longer can live on the 4th floor of a building.
- A student has severe allergies and cannot live in a building with carpeted floors.

### **Mental Health Examples:**

- Student has recently experienced a personal trauma and is having trouble concentrating in a room with other students.
- Student has a documented diagnosis of depression or anxiety that makes it difficult to share a room.

### **Disability Examples:**

- Student uses a wheelchair and must have access to a building that provides appropriate accessibility.
- A student has a muscular disorder that requires support bars in bathroom facilities

### **Religious Examples:**

- Student practices Kosher living and cannot use shared kitchen facilities with non-Kosher students.
- Student's religion requires all-female or all-male living environment.

**Supporting documentation** All requests for special housing accommodations must be accompanied by supporting documentation to substantiate the request. All supporting documentation must be submitted at the time of the request in order for the request to be considered. Supporting documentation for medical and mental health requests must come from the physician treating the student and must be evaluated by Rensselaer's Medical Director. Supporting documentation for religious requests should come from the leader of the student's religious community. Students requesting an accommodation for a disability must be registered with Rensselaer's Disabled Student Services office.

**Waiver/exemption requests** Students who wish to be released from a housing contract must demonstrate a change in financial circumstances, or have documentation of other extenuating circumstances that necessitate a release from housing. Supporting documentation from Financial Aid may be requested.

**Release for open discussion** Please note that **only** the Residence Life Office can process a specific assignment based on a special need. If a student presents their situation to another Institute department, staff member or RA, that does not automatically qualify the student for a special housing assignment – the application form must be submitted to Residence Life. No other Institute department has the authority to place students based on special needs. Residence Life will work with other offices for recommendations based on documentation that the student provides. By signing the form upon submission, you are agreeing that Residence Life may speak with other offices as appropriate (Health/Counseling Center, Dean of Students Office, Advising-Learning Assistance Center, etc.) to determine appropriate accommodations based on the presented information. Because the number of special housing requests can exceed the number of specific rooms available, the submission of this form does not automatically guarantee a special housing assignment will be granted. Applications will be reviewed, and a decision will be made by the Vice President for Student Life and/or appointed designees.

## Special Housing Request/Housing Release Form

If you would like to request special housing accommodations or a release from housing requirements, please fill out this form and fax it to Residence Life at 518-276-6223. You may also mail it to us at the following address: Office of Residence Life, Commons West, 110 8th Street, Troy, NY 12180

All requests will be reviewed by the Vice President for Student Life or appropriate designees. Students will be notified of their status via email and/or telephone once a decision has been made. Please submit all supporting documentation at the time of request.

**RIN #:** 6 - 6 - 0 - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**NAME:** Last First Middle Gender: \_\_\_\_M \_\_\_\_F

\_\_\_\_\_  
**ADDRESS:** Street City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
**PHONE:** Home/permanent Cell phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
**EMAIL:** Rensselaer Home (if applicable)

### Housing request – please check the appropriate box for your request

#### Special Housing Accommodations

- Medical/health
- Disability/mobility impairment
- Religious
- Other (please list)

#### Housing Waiver/Exemption

- Change in financial circumstances
- Other (please list)

(Please see previous page for specific details for special housing accommodations)

Please briefly describe the accommodation you are seeking to meet your needs (i.e. single room, uncarpeted space, disabled accessible room, etc.)

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**Signature**

**Date**

\* By signing above, you are agreeing that Residence Life and the Vice President for Student Life or designee may speak with other offices as necessary to determine appropriate accommodations and/or to verify your request for release.

**For Office Use Only:**

Medical Director Verification \_\_\_\_\_  
VP for Student Life Verification \_\_\_\_\_  
Residence Life Verification \_\_\_\_\_  
DSS Verification \_\_\_\_\_

Request approved? Y / N  
Student notified date \_\_\_\_\_  
Notification via: \_\_\_\_\_ Email / Phone



### Alternate Format Textbook Request Form

If you are a student who has registered with the Disability Student Services Office and have a diagnosed disability that prevents you from using standard instructional materials and would like to request an electronic copy of your textbooks please complete the information below and submit to the DSS office.

**YOU MUST FIRST PURCHASE THE TEXTBOOK AND PROVIDE A HARD COPY OF SCANNED IN COPY OF THE RECEIPT OF PURCHASE BEFORE A REQUEST CAN BE SUBMITTED FOR AN ELECTRONIC TEXT.**

<b><i>Student Information</i></b>	
Semester Requesting Textbooks	
Student's Full Name	
RIN #	
Student's Email Address	
Student's Local Address	
City, State, Zip Code	
<b><i>Course 1 Information</i></b>	
Instructor's Name	
Course Name	
<b><i>Textbook 1 Information</i></b>	
Textbook Title	

Edition	
Author	
ISBN Number	
Publisher	
Date of Textbook Purchase	
Location of Textbook Purchase	
Purchase Price	

<b><i>Course 2 Information</i></b>	
Instructor's Name	
Course Name	
<b><i>Textbook 2 Information</i></b>	
Textbook Title	
Edition	
Author	
ISBN Number	
Publisher	
Date of Textbook Purchase	
Location of Textbook Purchase	
Purchase Price	

<b><i>Course 3 Information</i></b>	
Instructor's Name	
Course Name	
<b><i>Textbook 3 Information</i></b>	
Textbook Title	
Edition	
Author	
ISBN Number	
Publisher	
Date of Textbook Purchase	
Location of Textbook Purchase	
Purchase Price	

<b><i>Course 4 Information</i></b>	
Instructor's Name	
Course Name	
<b><i>Textbook 4 Information</i></b>	
Textbook Title	
Edition	
Author	
ISBN Number	
Publisher	
Date of Textbook Purchase	
Location of Textbook Purchase	
Purchase Price	
<b><i>Course 5 Information</i></b>	
Instructor's Name	
Course Name	
<b><i>Textbook 5 Information</i></b>	
Textbook Title	
Edition	
Author	

ISBN Number	
Publisher	
Date of Textbook Purchase	
Location of Textbook Purchase	
Purchase Price	



### **Agreement on the Use of Recorded, Electronic or Other Alternatively Formatted Course Materials**

- I agree that I am enrolled for the semester and the particular course(s) for which I am requesting alternatively formatted instructional materials.
- I have provided the designated college official with appropriate documentation of the disability that prevents me from using standard instructional material. I understand that this documentation will be kept on file at the college.
- I understand that I must purchase instructional materials at the same cost as other students.
- I agree that I will not copy or reproduce alternatively formatted instructional materials nor allow anyone else to do so pursuant to the requirements of the copyright revision act of 1976 as amended (17 U.S.C. §101 et seq.).
- I will not share alternatively formatted materials with any other party.
- I understand that any violation of this agreement may be considered a violation of the college's Student Code of Conduct and may result in penalties including suspension and expulsion. Violations may also constitute a violation of federal and/or state laws and may result in civil or criminal prosecution, payment of fines or other moneys to the copyright holder, and/or incarceration.

I have read and understand the policies and procedures outlined above and agree to comply with them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**  
 110 8<sup>th</sup> Street | 4714 Academy Hall, Troy, NY 12180-3590  
 Phone: 518-276-8197 | Fax: 518-276-4839 | Email: smithm@rpi.edu

### **Comparison of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

	<b>IDEA</b>	<b>Section 504</b>	<b>ADA</b>
<b>Requirements in the Law</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires any agency, school or institution receiving federal financial assistance to provide person with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, an opportunity to be fully integrated into the mainstream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extends coverage of Section 504 to employment, public and private education institutions, transportation providers and telecommunications, regardless of presence of any federal funding</li> </ul>
<b>Definitions in the Law</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific disability categories are defined in the law; covers students with educational disabilities that require special services from specifically trained teachers</li> <li>• Not all students with disabilities are eligible</li> </ul>	Defines persons with disabilities who <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a physical or mental impairment which limits one or more major life functions</li> <li>• Have a record of such an impairment</li> <li>• Are regarded as having</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of disability essentially the same as Section 504 and extends coverage to persons without disabilities who may be related to or associated with a person with a disability – includes HIV status, contagious and non-</li> </ul>

	<b>IDEA</b>	<b>Section 504</b>	<b>ADA</b>
		an impairment	contagious diseases
<b>Who is covered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers students with educational disabilities that require special education services ages 3 -21 or until graduation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protects all persons from discrimination in educational setting based solely on disability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protects all persons from discrimination in educational setting based solely on disability</li> </ul>

	<b>IDEA</b>	<b>Section 504</b>	<b>ADA</b>
<b>Services provided</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers educational services that are remedial in addition to services available to all mainstream students (i.e., PE, Art, field trips, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminates barriers that would prevent a student from full participation in programs/series offered to the general school population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminates barriers that would prevent a student from full participation in programs/series offered to the general school population</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools receive federal funding to provide remedial services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires that school not discriminate based on student's disability and must provide appropriate accommodations, but schools receive no additional financial support to provide support services or auxiliary aids</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires that school not discriminate based on student's disability and must provide appropriate accommodations, but schools receive no additional financial support to provide support services or auxiliary aids</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation/ Documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School district is responsible for identifying and evaluating students with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same for elementary and secondary schools</li> <li>Same for students in college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students must self-identify as having a disability and must provide adequate documentation of the disability</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluations are the responsibility of the school and are performed at no expense to the student/parent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same for elementary and secondary schools</li> <li>Same for students in college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluations/documentation of disability are the student's responsibility and expense</li> </ul>

	<b>IDEA</b>	<b>Section 504</b>	<b>ADA</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents must consent to evaluations and placement decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same for elementary and secondary schools</li> <li>• Same for students in college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student has responsibility for advocacy, negotiating accommodations plan, and following appropriate recommendations</li> </ul>
<b>IEP/ Accommodations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed with parents, teachers and other specialists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 504 Plan developed with parents, teachers, and school personnel involved (Elementary and Secondary students)</li> <li>• Same for college/postsecondary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation plan developed with student and College's Disabilities Services Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom Placement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement must be in the least restrictive environment; may be special classrooms, resource, or regular classroom (Elementary and Secondary students)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement is in regular classroom with support services to eliminate barriers to the educational experience (Elementary, Secondary and College students)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All courses are mainstream with accommodations provided to students who qualify under ADA</li> </ul>

## HOW IS COLLEGE DIFFERENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

<b>HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES</b>	<b>COLLEGE CLASSES</b>
Each day you proceed from one class directly to another.	You often have hours between classes; class times vary throughout the day and evening.
You spend 6 hours each day--30 hours a week--in class.	You spend 12 to 16 hours each week in class
The school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters and some do not.	The academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters. And an optional summer semester
Most of your classes are arranged for you.	You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your academic adviser, and register on the web. Schedules tend to look lighter than they really are.
Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.	Professors may not formally take attendance, but they are still likely to know whether or not you attended.
Classes generally have no more than 35 students.	Classes may number 100 students or more.
You are provided with textbooks at little or no expense.	You need to budget substantial funds for textbooks, which will usually cost more than \$100 per course.
You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.	Graduation requirements are complex and differ for different majors and sometimes different years. You are expected to know those that apply to you.

<b>HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS</b>	<b>COLLEGE PROFESSORS</b>
Teachers check your completed homework.	Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.
Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.	Professors may not remind you of incomplete work.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.	Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.
<b>HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS</b>	<b>COLLEGE PROFESSORS</b>
Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.	Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.
Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.	Professors expect you to get from classmates any notes from classes you missed.
Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Or, they may expect <i>you</i> to relate the classes to the textbook readings.

Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Professors may lecture (nonstop), expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a must.
Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.	Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.
<b>STUDYING IN HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>STUDYING IN COLLEGE</b>
You may study outside of class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.	You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.
You often need to read or hear presentations only once to learn all you need to learn about them.	You need to review class notes and text material regularly.
You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class.	You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class.
Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you needed to learn from assigned readings.	Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so.

<b>TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>TESTS IN COLLEGE</b>
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.	Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You will need to organize material to prepare for the test and may have only 2-3 tests per semester.
Makeup tests are often available.	Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.	Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.	Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.
Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.	Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.
<b>GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>GRADES IN COLLEGE</b>
Grades are given for most assigned work.	Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.
Consistently good homework grades may help raise your overall grade when test grades are low.	Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.

Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade.	Extra credit projects cannot, are often not available. If they are, they usually will not significantly alter a student's grade.
Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.	Watch out for your <i>first</i> tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected--but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. You may be shocked when you get your grades. If you receive notice of low grades on a Mid-Semester Progress Report, see your academic advisor or visit the Learning Center.
You may graduate as long as you passed all required courses with a D or higher.	You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the department standard--typically, a "C" average, but not always.
<b>GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>GRADES IN COLLEGE</b>
Guiding principle: "Effort counts." Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."	Guiding principle: "Results count." Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you <i>achieve</i> good results, it will not <i>substitute</i> for results in the grading process.
<b>PERSONAL FREEDOM IN HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>PERSONAL FREEDOM IN COLLEGE</b>
High school is <i>mandatory</i> and <i>free</i> (unless you choose other options).	College is <i>voluntary</i> and <i>expensive</i> .
Your time is usually structured by others.	You manage your own time.
You need permission to participate in extracurricular activities	You must decide whether to participate in extracurricular activities. ( <i>Hint:</i> Choose wisely in the first semester and then add later.)
You need money for special purchases or	You need money to meet basic necessities.

events.	
You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.	You will be faced with a large number of moral and ethical decisions you may not have faced previously. <i>You</i> must balance your responsibilities and set priorities.
Guiding principle: You will usually be told what your responsibilities are and corrected if your behavior is out of line.	Guiding principle: You're old enough to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.

## Tips for using your faculty notification memorandum



- Show the memo to your professors early each semester, well before you have any exams. Discuss with them all necessary arrangements, especially when and where to take your tests with extra time. There are many ways to arrange this depending on your schedule and your professor's: start exam early, stay later, in same classroom, in department's office, etc. Be sure to make clear, specific plans with your instructors so there is no confusion on exam day! Note those arrangements in your calendar on the exam date. It's your grade in the end, so you need to take charge of getting the arrangements made clearly. Be as flexible as possible in making the arrangements, to accommodate your professor's time schedule. If a TA will be involved in the arrangements, check to make sure they are "in the loop."
- If you are using extra test time, ask your professors if they would like you to remind them before each exam, and if so, by what method: email, verbal reminder the class before the test, etc. Note this in your planner, calendar, or some other method to remind yourself to remind your professors!
- You should keep the original memorandum in your records or file for the entire academic year. Make several photocopies so that if your professors want one, you can easily provide it to them—and you'll look very efficient! If you lose this original, contact me for a new one.
- If you find that you don't need the extra time after you've taken one or more exams in a course, you can always tell the professor that you want to cancel your request (though you might want to keep the option open for a long final exam).

- The memorandum is yours to use as you judge necessary--or not use. Be aware that if you decide not to use it and your exam results are less than satisfactory, faculty are not obliged to allow a make-up exam or other considerations afterward.
- If your experience indicates that your arrangements/accommodations need to be revised in some way, please contact the DSS office at any time during the year.
- In the future, each fall you should get a new memorandum for that new academic year.

No appointment is necessary — just stop by the Dean of Students Office, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Academy Hall.

## **Some capital region resources for LD/ADD/ADHD evaluations\*:**

### **University at Albany** (best bargain)

Psychological Services Center  
135 Western Avenue, Albany  
Husted Hall Room 167  
(518) 442-4900

- Park on Western Avenue—ask for details
- Bring any previous or old documentation
- Fee is \$300-500 based on income (half up front)
- Be sure to mention appointment is for LD or ADD testing
- Summer hours also available

### **Psychopharmacology Consultants** (for ADD/ADHD only)

Dr. Kevin George  
18 Computer Drive West  
Albany  
(518) 458-2481

- Call for fees
- Parking readily available

### **College of St. Rose**

432 Western Ave., Albany  
Kim Lamparelli, Director of Clinical Services  
(518) 458-5354

- Parking—check first
- Bring any previous or old documentation
- General fee is \$1,200 (there is a discount for St. Rose students)

**Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies** in each state may also offer LD testing at no charge. However, there is usually a good deal of paperwork and time delay in getting such assistance. Interested New York State residents should contact the regional office that covers their county ([www.vesid.nysed.gov/do/locations.htm](http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/do/locations.htm)). Out-of-state students can locate their state's vocational rehabilitation agency by checking [www.jan.wvu.edu/SBSES/VOCREHAB.HTM](http://www.jan.wvu.edu/SBSES/VOCREHAB.HTM).

## Student Questionnaire on Study Habits and Preferences

*Please Note: "Studying" is defined here broadly as reading assigned materials; working on homework, papers and class projects; meeting with study groups, class project groups and tutors; researching relevant information online or in the library; and reviewing notes, textbooks and other materials in preparation for exams—all occurring outside of the normal time spent in class.*

1. Do you know approximately how much study time you should be spending (on average) every day/week in order to achieve a passing grade in all your classes? How much study time did you average per day/week last semester?
2. Where (locations) and when (weekdays, evenings, weekends, approx. times) do you normally study? (Follow-up: Describe where and when you have studied over the previous two or three days. Do you know where the study areas are located in your residence hall and in campus buildings?)
3. Where do you usually study between classes during the day? (Follow-up: Do you study in a different location during the daytime v. evenings and weekends? Is it easier/harder to study at certain days/times than others? Why?)
4. What problems have you experienced finding a good place to study? (Follow-up: Are you comfortable sitting at a large table where other students are studying? Are you reluctant to enter a study area if others are already there? Are you comfortable studying around students you don't know?)
5. Do you have difficulty finding a place to meet with your tutors for studying? (Follow-up: Describe how you make the arrangements to meet with your tutors.)
6. Describe your ideal study environment. (e.g., large lounge with couches, small area with tables, study carrels/cubicles in quiet area, background noise v. very quiet, distraction factors, etc.)
7. What do you do if you fall behind in your studying?
8. If a study area were available to you near the center of the campus, do you believe you would use it on a regular basis? (If the answer is "yes" and the student is not now using the library or a study lounge in one of the academic buildings, ask why they do not use those options.)

## **Online Information for All Prospective College Students with Disabilities**

*Check out these great websites for essential information:*

[www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=82](http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=82)  
(a good overall collection of the laws, services, and financial aid resources available to college students with disabilities)

[www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu) (an online clearinghouse, Higher Education & the Disabled—HEATH—contains a wealth of information, including financial aid resources)

[www.thinkcollege.net/students/index.php?page=consider](http://www.thinkcollege.net/students/index.php?page=consider) (about pre-college exploration and planning)

*For additional information:*

### Documentation

The Educational Testing Service’s Documentation Guidelines have been adopted by a large number of colleges and universities. Check each individual college/university for that institution’s documentation guidelines. Most require recent documentation with testing results no older than 3 years on the date the student registers for services. Some colleges require that adult norms/scales be used. The ETS documentation guidelines for disability accommodations can be found at [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) (then follow links for “Test Takers with Disabilities”).

### Services and Financial Aid for Qualifying New York State College Students

Students with vision disabilities should contact the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) at [www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh). All other students with disabilities should contact Vocational & Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) at [www.vesid.nysed.gov/do](http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/do). College services and tuition assistance is based on income eligibility, vocational goals, and other criteria. Assistance from these agencies is usually provided through regional offices around the state. Your school district also may be able to provide a referral.

# NOTES