

# DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICE



Welcome Packet

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# Opening Letter

Dear Student,

Welcome to the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) at Jacksonville University. The DSS works with JU faculty and staff to ensure that reasonable accommodations are made to allow students an equal opportunity to learn in the classroom and to have access to all areas of the JU campus. We do this by ensuring that we provide appropriate support to our students with disabilities and/or any medical condition that may affect their academic progress by collaborating with faculty and staff in removing barriers while pursuing excellence in education and service.

These services are provided in accordance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). Receiving this packet signifies that you have completed the registration process and have agreed to abide by the school's Academic Integrity guidelines, Code of Conduct, and your academic program's handbook. Please understand that although we try to cover all the information that may be pertinent to you during our meetings (Initial meet-up and registration), we know that we are providing you with a lot of information at once, which can be overwhelming and sometimes we cannot cover everything. Furthermore, we are aware that you may also be receiving important information from your faculty members and other departments on campus, so we want to be mindful of that.

The information you will find in this packet is meant to be a quick guide to our services, but it does not include everything related to our services and/or information you may need. Therefore, we encourage students to review their Accommodate Student portal for the most up-to-date information on anything related to their accommodations and services, the school's website for information regarding activities or additional services, and Blackboard for information about your current courses. Our website also has information regarding non-academic accommodations (Housing, Parking Services, and/or Dietary Restrictions), and a more detailed guide to our processes and guidelines.

Please review the information below to understand your rights and responsibilities, as students registered to receive services through our office are still responsible for maintaining the same academic levels as other students, maintaining appropriate behavior, and providing timely notifications of or for any special needs.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are looking forward to assisting you in every way we can.

Sincerely,

DSS Team

Jacksonville University

904-256-7533

## Important Information to Remember

- It's imperative for you to check and review your email daily. Especially if you have made a request through our system "Accommodate".
- It is your responsibility to submit a Semester/Renewal Request for each semester that you are using your accommodations. Accommodations are not retroactive, so it is in your best interest to submit your request at the start of the semester. You can do this via your "Accommodate" portal.
  - Please note that once a semester request is submitted, a copy of your letter will be sent to your faculty to review via Accommodate.
  - Also, if you add a new class after submitting a semester request, you will need to submit a new request for letters to be sent to your new faculty.
- You are still responsible for connecting with each one of your faculty members to discuss your accommodation(s), and/or how you would like to use them. If you are unsure of how to approach this or are in need of assistance with this step, please contact us.
- Students are encouraged to request or renew their accommodation services at the beginning of each term, as some accommodations may take a longer time to be set up.

# Rights and Responsibilities

## Your Rights

- To receive equal access to all educational opportunities available and/or provided by the school to the general student body (e.g., courses, programs, activities, services, jobs, or facilities).
- Reasonable accommodations based on the supportive documentation provided, potential barriers, academic program requirements, and DSS counselor recommendations.
- Privacy and confidentiality regarding your disability, medical, or learning condition.

## Your Responsibilities

- To self-identify as a person with an academic and/or medical need and seek support services in a timely manner.
- Provide the necessary documentation to initiate the process with our office.
- To uphold the policies and procedures with all your dealings with the Disability Support Services Office and Jacksonville University.
- To activate your accommodations every term, to ensure they are available for your use in a timely manner.
- To meet all academic and conduct standards as noted in our student handbook.

# Jacksonville University's Rights and Responsibilities

## JU Rights

- Uphold the university's academic standards.
- Identify and establish appropriate and reasonable accommodations based on current disability documentation completed by a qualified professional and in consultation with the student.
- To deny a request for accommodations, auxiliary aids/services, and/or academic adjustments if:
  - The student fails to provide appropriate supporting documentation.
  - The documentation does not support or warrant the service(s) requested.
  - It substantially alters an essential element of a course, program, or activity of the university, or
  - It poses a threat to the health and safety of others.
- Send verification of a documented disability that states the recommended accommodations, without disclosing a student's specific disability, unless requested and approved by the student beforehand.
- Establish learning outcomes that are fundamental to courses and academic programs and evaluate students on this basis.

## JU Responsibilities

- Recommend reasonable accommodations for students with appropriately documented disabilities and/or medical conditions in a timely manner upon request.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students.
- Provide information on university policies and procedures to students and ensure its availability in accessible formats upon request.

- Make appropriate referrals to on-campus services.
- Maintain the same standards for students with disabilities as for students without disabilities.
- Arrange for and provide reasonable accommodations upon request.

## Confidentiality

All student documentation and/or files are considered confidential and securely stored. Students' names and information are kept confidential and are not released to anyone without the student's prior written permission. Any information provided to the Disability Support Services Office during or for the registration process is not shared with any other party, as Faculty members will only receive a letter identifying the different accommodations and/or services approved. This also means that unless requested by the student or by a "needs to know" staff member, we do not inform any faculty, academic program, or staff of a student's accommodation or status with our office without proper authorization.

Please be advised that any documentation regarding services you received from High School and/or any previous institution must be sent directly to the DSS office for processing. If the documentation is sent to any other department, i.e., Admissions, that documentation will not find its way to us, as confidentiality laws prevent it from being shared without previous authorization (in writing).

## FERPA

According to University Policy and in accordance with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), our office will not release any information regarding a student's file, academic record(s), academic standing, or course information, unless the FERPA waiver has been signed by the student. The DSS office will not disclose any information as noted before to a student's parents, family, or guardian without said waiver.

The student or education records are those records, files, documents, and other materials which:

- a) Contain information directly related to a student.
- b) Records that are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a person acting for such agency or institution.

# Important Policy Information

## Audio Notetaking Policies

We assist students in learning and/or enhancing their note-taking skills by providing them with the ability to audio record their lecture, either with the use of a sponsored program or with their own device. This tool allows students to record their lectures to review and/or take additional notes at their own pace. Once the accommodation is approved, students agree to the following:

- The recordings are for personal study use only, and no other purpose.
- You may not share the audio recordings with others or profit financially from the content I record.
- The information contained in the audio-recorded lectures is protected under federal and international copyright legislation and may not be published or posted without first obtaining the expressed written consent of the lecturer.

## Flexible Attendance Policy

Considering that some students' medical conditions may prevent them from attending and/or participating in class, this accommodation allows them to miss and/or be tardy without having to provide a written excuse to the faculty member, but will have to understand and abide by the following:

- The student is responsible for communicating with the professor regarding the absence in a timely manner.
- If requested, the student will provide the DSS office with a doctor's note explaining the absence.
- When the student returns to class, the student will complete missed work or exams within a mutually agreed upon period of time.
- If absenteeism is excessive and the student is at risk of not meeting course requirements, the instructor and/or student should contact the DSS to discuss further options.

## Testing Accommodations and Testing Center policies

Students who have been approved to receive or use testing accommodations understand and agree that testing accommodations must be discussed with each faculty member at the beginning of the term, or when the letter is provided (whichever happens first). This conversation should note the preferred location for testing (testing center or alternative location designated by the faculty member) and if there are any scheduling conflicts, please ensure that the provided testing times would not interfere with your other classes.

Also, keep in mind that the testing center is a designed and dedicated space for students with testing accommodations that provide the following:

- A reduced distraction space/environment
- A space for students to take their exams in a more comfortable environment than the one they would have in a regular classroom,

- A space with a limited number of seats available per day (at max 10-12 students at a time, when the capacity is 20).
- Be mindful and respectful of your peers when you get in and get yourself ready and situated to take your exam.
- Be ready to set your phone on “do not disturb”, remove your smartwatch and place them on your backpack or give it to the testing assistant.
- Have what you need at hand. Going through your backpack and pencil case while inside the room makes a ton of unnecessary noise.
- If you know you are prone to get distracted, I suggest you don’t pick a seat by the door or one that faces the door.
- If you would prefer or benefit from wearing noise-canceling headphones. Bring some.
- The space tends to be on the colder side, so dress appropriately.

## Alternate Text policies

Students who are approved to receive alternate texts agree that the file provided for your use by the DSS office is the specific subject of the request. You agree not to otherwise reproduce, use, sell, transmit, publish, broadcast, or otherwise disseminate or distribute the file (or any version modified for accessibility purposes) to anyone. Additional information regarding this agreement can be found under the registration process agreements file.

## Medical and Compassionate Withdrawal Policy

The University recognizes that severe, unforeseen personal, medical, or extenuating circumstances may arise that prohibit a student from continuing and completing their coursework within a given semester. This may be a result of personal illness or injury; the illness, injury, or death of an immediate family member; required military relocation or job transfer out of the area; or other extenuating circumstances that may warrant a medical or compassionate (hereinafter referred to as “medical”) withdrawal.

Students may be eligible to apply for a partial or a full medical withdrawal. To be eligible for a partial or full medical withdrawal, the student must submit sufficient documentation to support the withdrawal request. The following information pertains to the documentation required and the process to follow when submitting the request.

For more information, please visit the following [link](#)



# ADA Grievance Procedure

Jacksonville University (JU) encourages the resolution of formal complaints in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Any form of retaliation for bringing forward a formal complaint will not be tolerated. The formal complaint process applies to all students and should be followed in all cases when informal resolution is not sufficient to resolve the issue.

Though anonymous formal complaints are permitted, doing so may limit the University's ability to investigate and respond. Information concerning the nature, scope, evaluation, and resolution of formal complaints shall be confidential to the greatest extent possible and will be shared only with those people who need to know.

A formal complaint is a request for the resolution of a problem, conflict, concern, or issue that negatively impacts a student(s). Student formal complaints may include (but are not limited to) issues regarding policies, procedures, services, and offices.

Students with disabilities and/or registered with the Disability Support Services office who believe they have been denied "reasonable accommodations", have been denied access, excluded from participating or denied benefits that limit your student experience, and/or otherwise have experience or being subject to discrimination based on their status or disability should follow the following steps:

1. The student should reach out to our office and request a meeting with our Disability Support Services Director, Olga Lucia Florez. She may be contacted directly at 904-256-7787 or via email at [oflorez@ju.edu](mailto:oflorez@ju.edu)
2. The Disability Support Services Director will investigate the complaint, and follow the information-gathering procedure, which may include personal interviews with all the affected parties to attempt to reach a resolution with the people involved.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution and/or outcome of the process, they may file a formal complaint/grievance through this form <https://www.ju.edu/campuslife/forms/student-complaint-form.php> within fifteen (15) days after the conclusion to resolve the matter informally.

## Contact Information

Disability Support Services Office – [dss@ju.edu](mailto:dss@ju.edu) or 256-7533

Located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Davis Student Commons, Suite 318.

Visit us at <https://www.ju.edu/disabilityservices/index.php>

## Professional Staff



**Olga Lucia Florez**

Director of Disability  
Support Services

[oflorez@ju.edu](mailto:oflorez@ju.edu)