

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, reaffirmed by the 1992 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), was created to protect the rights of people with disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act specifically applies to colleges and universities and can have a direct impact on our day-to-day activities. The information below, "The Facts about Section 504 in the Classroom," describes in more detail the law, how it impacts the classroom, modifications that can be made to comply with the law, and resources available to assist in understanding the law. Please take the time to read this fact sheet carefully. If you need further information or have questions, contact Susan Ackerman, Disability Services Director, at extension 5-6988 or by e-mail at smacst@rit.edu.

It is every faculty member's responsibility to become familiar with the law and to provide reasonable accommodations. More importantly, we want to continue to do everything reasonable to assist our many talented and skilled persons with disabilities in reaching their potential. The statement below has been developed to reach out to students with different academic needs and should be read by faculty to their classes during the first week of the semester.

"RIT is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request accommodations such as special seating or testing modifications due to a disability, please contact the Disability Services Office. It is located in the Student Alumni Union, Room 1150; the website is www.rit.edu/dso. After you receive accommodation approval, it is imperative that you see me during office hours so that we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary."

Below you will find listed the staff in the Disability Services Office and the names and telephone numbers of the Disability Liaisons in each college.

- **Disability Services Director:** Susan Ackerman, 5-6988, smacst@rit.edu
- **Academic Accommodations Coordinator:** Shelley Zoeke, 5-5538, slzdso@rit.edu
- **Staff Assistant:** Alyson Jones, 5-2023, aljldc@rit.edu
- **Disability Liaisons:**
 - Gail Quartieri, CAST – 5-5435; gqcad@rit.edu; 1121 Ross Hall
 - Kathy Estabrooks, SCB – 5-6085; kestabrooks@saunders.rit.edu; A340 Lowenthal Hall
 - Joanne Roets, GCCIS – 5-4779; jxrgla@rit.edu; 1013 Golisano Hall
 - Fredda Bishop, KGCOE – 5-4595; flbeen@rit.edu; 2203 J. Gleason Hall
 - Debbie Kingsbury, CIAS – 5-5154; dlkpgd@rit.edu; 1065 Gannett Hall
 - John Smithgall, CLA - 5-2440; jssgla@rit.edu; 2212 Liberal Arts Hall
 - Mary Pat Magde, NTID – 5-6638; mpmycc@ntid.rit.edu; 2335 Hugh Carey Hall
 - Laurie Mousley, NTID – VP 585-286-4632; lamncd@ntid.rit.edu; 2295 Lyndon Johnson Hall
 - Catherine Mahrt-Washington, COS – 5-7046; cawsse@rit.edu, 1112 Gosnell Hall

- Abby Berner Cantwell, School of Individualized Study – 5-7297, ambcada@rit.edu; 2210 Eastman Hall
- Susan Lindsay, University Studies Program – 5-5263; slbsse@rit.edu; 1180 Student Alumni Union
- Rebecca Roberts, CHST – 5-4056; rarhst@rit.edu; 3163 CBET
- Donna Podeszek, GIS – 5-4990; dkpcpm@rit.edu; 3170 Golisano Institute for Sustainability

THE FACTS ABOUT SECTION 504 IN THE CLASSROOM; WHAT IS SECTION 504? In 1973 The Rehabilitation Act was passed; Section 504 of this act states that "no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall solely by reason of his or her disability, 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." Subpart E of Section 504 is applicable to all post-secondary educational programs and activities which receive Federal financial assistance. Colleges and universities must be free from discrimination in their recruitment, admissions and treatment of students.

An "otherwise qualified individual with a disability" is defined as one who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the university's programs and activities. This may include students who are Deaf or hard of hearing or who have orthopedic, speech, or learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, blindness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, AIDS, mental illness, drug or alcohol addiction in remission, heart disease or epilepsy.

HOW DOES THIS LAW IMPACT THE CLASSROOM? For college students with disabilities, academic adjustments may be needed to insure maximal participation. These adjustments may include the use of auxiliary equipment and support staff. Students with disabilities may request academic modifications that allow for their maximal participation. If appropriate, faculty will receive a "Disability Services Agreement" from the Disability Services Office that lists their accommodations. Examples of reasonable and timely accommodations are:

- Extended test time. Test in an alternate location with a proctor.
- Use of alternate methods for students to demonstrate course mastery.
- Use of basic four function calculators, word processors, spell check devices, readers (or reader software), or scribes (or speech-to-text software) during examinations.
- Provision for note takers.
- Removal of structural or architectural barriers or disturbances.

Faculty must provide all the accommodations listed in a student's Disability Services Agreement. If a student requires accommodations not listed in the Disability Services Agreement, or determines that a currently listed accommodation is no longer necessary, the student must seek a revision to the Disability Services Agreement. This revision can only be made by the Disability Services Office. Faculty must continue to provide all the accommodations listed in a student's Disability Services Agreement until they receive a revised Disability Services Agreement from the Disability Services Office.

It is vital that faculty **select or provide accessible media** for their courses. See [RIT's guidelines for captioning audio-visual media](#).

When considering the use of emerging technology such as electronic book readers, be aware that some of these devices lack an accessible text-to-speech function so may not be accessible to students who are blind, have low vision or other print disabilities.

WHERE CAN THE RESOURCES REGARDING SECTION 504 BE FOUND? Questions about accommodations for students with disabilities can be addressed to Susan Ackerman, Disability Services Director, at x5-6988. Visit the website at: www.rit.edu/dso.