

Services for Students with Disabilities Confidentiality Statement

For Documentation and Services

The Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office treats as confidential, any written material obtained to verify a disability, to plan for appropriate services, or to document services and contacts with this office. The following are guidelines used by the SSD office regarding disability related information:

- All disability related information regarding students served by the SSD office is housed in the Services for Students with Disabilities office.
- All disability related information is kept in separate files for each student and housed in secure file cabinets. This information is also stored in a secure electronic database system housed within the SSD office.
- The SSD office utilizes a secure, password protected, electronic database to store student information, student documents, and records of appointments. This information is accessible only in the SSD office by an authorized SSD staff person.
- Only staff persons working at the SSD have access to paper and electronic files.
- Students who request services/accommodations acknowledge that some level of disclosure to select faculty may be necessary to provide the requested accommodation(s). Disclosure will occur with the student's specific written permission with the understanding that only necessary information for the purposes of accommodation will be communicated.
- A student may request to review the contents of his/her own paper and/or electronic file. This review must be done in the presence of a SSD staff member. All information in the file is the property of the SSD office. Students may receive copies of only disability related records verifying the disability and the need for services and accommodation(s). Students must sign a release for the copies and an inventory list of all materials copied will be kept in the folder.
- Five (5) years (for undergraduate students) or ten (10) years (for graduate students) after the last date of enrollment, all materials in a student's folder in the SSD office will be destroyed.

Information Disclosure

Periodically the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office is asked to provide information about students identified and served through the office. This data is reported in a manner that protects the identity of all students. *The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the Buckley Amendment, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990 (ADA), do not allow faculty access to disability related information.* The SSD office

may, however, communicate to faculty, information that a student has a documented disability and a need for accommodation(s).

This Information Disclosure describes how disability information about a student who is registered with the SSD office may be used and disclosed and how students can obtain access to their information. Please review this information carefully.

The SSD office values the privacy of its students and the confidentiality of the personal, educational, and health information entrusted to us. In order to protect this privacy, we have policies and procedures to limit disclosures of personal information to those which are minimally necessary for the delivery of services/accommodations of the student, those for which the student has given permission, and/or those required by law or public safety.

- 1. Signed release.** Information related to disability accommodations may be disclosed to persons the student has designated in a signed Release of Information form. The student can add or delete names by completing a new Release of Information form at any time.
- 2. Legal requirements.** Personal and/or documented disability information may be disclosed as required by court or administrative order, subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process. It may also be disclosed when legally requested by national security, intelligence, and other federal officials.
- 3. Contacts.** The student may be contacted by SSD to provide appointment reminders or other information of disability-related benefits or services that may be of interest to the student.
- 4. Other uses.** Disability information can be disclosed to the proper authorities to prevent/control injury or harm to the student or to others. Uses and disclosures of disability and personal information other than described above will be made only with the student's (your) written authorization. Such authorization when given may be revoked in writing by the student (you) at any time.

Rights and Responsibilities

Student:

- 1. The right to inspect and obtain copies of personal disability information.** Any such requests must be made in writing by the student to give SSD permission to release the information. A cost-based fee may be charged for copying disability records. SSD may deny, in writing, the release or viewing of personal disability information if the SSD office or relevant university officials determine that the release of the information may be harmful to the student or another person. When such a request is denied, the student may request to appeal the denial by following the SSD Grievance Procedure which is posted on the SSD website at www.ssd.vt.edu/grievanceprocedure.htm.

2. The right to request limits on the amount or types of disability information released. Such requests must be made in writing to the SSD office. SSD may not agree with this request when it is felt to be in the student's best interest to release the information and/or when such a release is mandated by the uses outlined above.

3. The right to request that communications between the student and SSD be kept confidential.

Services for Students with Disabilities:

Maintaining privacy. The SSD office is required by law to maintain the privacy of protected disability information and to provide and abide by this notice of its legal duties and privacy practices.

Complaints

Students may file an informal or formal (written) complaint regarding the security and/or privacy or discriminatory acts of their personal disability information with the Director for Services for Students with Disabilities.

Services for Students with Disabilities
310 Lavery Hall, Suite 310 (MC0185)
Blacksburg, VA 24061
e-mail: ssd@vt.edu
Phone: (V) 540-231-3788
Fax: 540-231-3232

Additionally, students may file a request for investigation or an informal complaint about possible violations of the privacy rules or discriminatory acts with the Virginia Tech Office for Equity and Accessibility (OEA), <https://oea.vt.edu/>.

Any student who believes that he or she has been harassed or discriminated against on the basis of disability may contact the Virginia Tech Office for Equity and Accessibility (OEA) at 540-231-2010 to discuss what options may be available, including filing a formal complaint. More information can be found on the OEA website at <https://oea.vt.edu/>.

Or a formal complaint may be filed with the Office for Civil Rights:

Office for Civil Rights
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1475
Phone: (202) 245-8300
TTY: (877) 521-2172

FAX: (202) 245-8301

Internet Privacy Statement

Website: Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

URL: <http://www.ssd.vt.edu>

This Internet Privacy Statement was created in order to demonstrate the department's firm commitment to privacy. The following discloses the information gathering and dissemination practices for this website.

Personal Information:

The SSD website only collects personal information entered by the user on various forms on the website. This information is used only for the purpose stated on the form, such as request for accommodation letters, registration for workshops, etc. The SSD staff does not share any personal information with any third parties nor does the department use any personal information for any purposes beyond those stated here.

Links to Virginia Tech Sites:

The SSD website contains links to other Virginia Tech pages. The privacy practices of other pages may vary with the purposes of the page. Consult the privacy statement on each page.

Links to External Sites:

The SSD website contains links to other sites. Virginia Tech is not responsible for the privacy practices or the content of such websites.

Security:

The SSD website has security measures in place to protect the loss, misuse, and alteration of the information under our control. Log file access is restricted to system administrators while stored on the server. Log files are rotated regularly and archived in a secure location.

Users should also consult Virginia Tech's policy on Acceptable Use of Information Systems: <http://www.vt.edu/about/acceptable-use.html>. Virginia Tech complies with all statutory and legal requirements with respect to access to information.

Data Usage:

This statement describes how Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at Virginia Tech will use data collected from visitors to the SSD website.

Visiting a page on Virginia Tech's SSD website...

. . . **to view or download information:** Information may be collected and stored for statistical purposes. For example, the number of visitors to the different sections of the SSD website may be counted to use in making the sections more useful to visitors.

Similar information is gathered for streaming audio and video, visits to web pages that require users to log in, interactive forms or questionnaires, or for other comparable types of connections.

. . . **to send SSD staff an e-mail:** By sending an electronic mail message to the SSD office or individual staff person, the sender's personal information is being sent (e.g., name, e-mail address, etc.). The information sent (sender's name, e-mail address, and message content) may be stored in order to respond to the message.

. . . **to fill out a form or to complete a questionnaire:** SSD web pages offer visitors opportunities to complete computer administered inventories. Data from online inventories and other information collected on SSD web pages through use of forms, questionnaires, or other means are used to help with the design of the SSD website and to help the department improve delivery of services to Virginia Tech students.

SSD maintains the privacy of data collected from visitors to the SSD website subject to applicable laws. Personal information or other information that permits identification of visitors to the website is not shared with or distributed to third parties.

Contact Information:

Any questions about this privacy statement, the practices of this website, or any dealings with this website should be directed to SSD at (540) 231-3788 or ssd@vt.edu.

Effective Date and Changes

This notice is effective from March 8, 2010 and is posted in prominent locations throughout the SSD office. It is also posted on the SSD public website at www.ssd.vt.edu. Copies of the notice may be obtained by requesting them at the SSD office. Additionally, students may request to see the written SSD office procedure on student privacy. SSD reserves the right to make changes to this notice and/or its procedures without notification other than posting or making available copies of revised notices in locations as above. Such changes, if and when made, will become effective for all of the disability information that SSD maintains.