

# FACULTY AND STAFF GUIDE TO DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES



*Book page overlaid with graph paper and pen*

## Rhode Island School of Design Disability Support Services

Phone: 401-709-8465

Email: [disabilitysupportservices@risd.edu](mailto:disabilitysupportservices@risd.edu)

Location: Carr House

Floor 2

210 Benefit Street



"THE ROOT OF DISABILITY  
OPPRESSION IS ABLEISM AND WE  
MUST WORK TO UNDERSTAND IT,  
COMBAT IT, AND CREATE  
ALTERNATIVE PRACTICES ROOTED IN  
JUSTICE."

Patty Berne "Disability Justice - A Working Draft"

*group of hands on top of one another*

# USING THIS GUIDE

## *Supporting Students with Disabilities*

The Office of Disability Support Services promotes equal access to learning for all students at RISD. This means that our work with students aims to remove barriers to a student's education. Our mission to support our students cannot be accomplished without the partnership of faculty and staff. The purpose of this guide is to provide useful information in supporting students with disabilities, as well as information regarding accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

# Table of Contents



## 04 Mission and Vision

Our philosophy

## Guide to Disability

## 05 Support Services

06 Accommodation letters explained, ADA information, and syllabus statements

## 07 Medical Reduced Course Load

Some students request to take 9 credits (below the 12 credit minimum). Learn about why

## 08 Service Animals (SA)

Definition of Service Animals

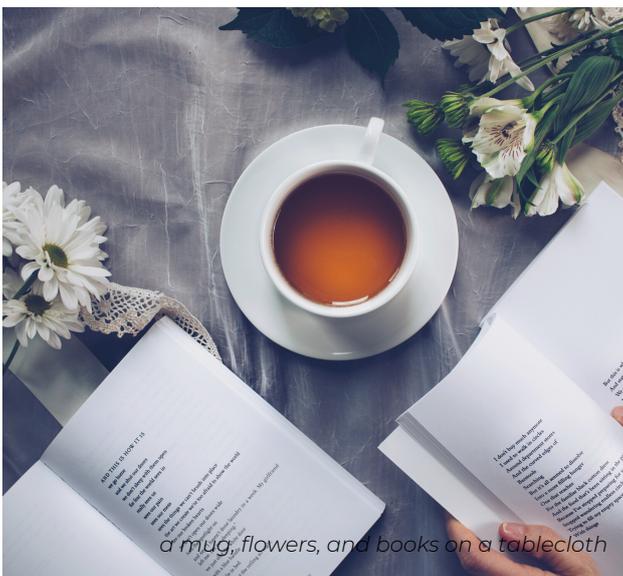
## 09 Emotional Support Animals (ESA)

Definition of Emotional Support Animals

## 10 The Difference Between Service Animals and ESA's

View the difference between Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals.

## 11 Additional Resources





*hand raised transposed in a pink and green blurry background*

## **MISSION**

The mission of DSS is to advocate for equal access providing support, mentorship, and tools needed to accomplish educational goals. DSS aims to foster an accessible and inclusive community where individuals are evaluated on their ability, rather than their disability.

---

## **DSS BRIEF OVERVIEW**

Rhode Island School of Design works with students with documented disabilities; substantially limiting or more major life activities both short and long term as defined by the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act).

The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) develops, arranges, and provides appropriate and reasonable accommodations for students in courses, programs, services, and facilities.

In higher education, students are responsible for requesting accommodations. Accommodations are determined by the DSS professional staff on an individualized and case by case basis.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES EMAIL:  
disabilitysupportservices@risd.edu

## FACULTY AND STAFF GUIDE TO DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Our office is built on a holistic, embodied, and student-centered co-curricular approach. Our work with students is aimed to promote self-advocacy, identity development, and sustainable life skills. We promote universal design across campus, and are committed to eliminating barriers both in and out of the classroom/studio environment.



Three students sitting on a couch with laptops open



student sitting outside with laptop open

### What is an Accommodation Letter?

An accommodation letter is a document created by RISD Disability Support Services that lists the reasonable accommodations that faculty must provide to a student. An accommodation letter is provided to students who have met all of the following criteria:

- Submitted appropriate documentation to verify their disability.
- Are eligible to receive reasonable accommodations at the Rhode Island School of Design.
- Met with a Disability Support Services staff member.

VISIT DSS FOR  
MORE FACULTY  
SPECIFIC  
RESOURCES

<https://info.risd.edu/disability-support-services-dss/#faculty-resources>





paintbrush on pink canvass



Paints and paint brush on a wooden table

## Considerations for Faculty: Accommodation Letters

- Students are advised to **meet individually** with their faculty about their needs specific to the course. Students are encouraged to keep open communication with their instructors.
- If a student **self discloses** that they have a disability, but has not provided an accommodation letter, please refer the student to Disability Support Services.
- Some students are approved to **receive their books in an alternate format**. They are instructed to send their book titles to DSS, and our office will help students to access the book titles that they may need.
- Before distributing an **exam**, please reach out to DSS so we can ensure that students receive the extended testing time they are qualified for.
- Respect the **confidentiality of students** with disabilities and adhere to FERPA standards; do not reveal a student's name or accommodations to others.
- **All disability documentation should go to DSS**. Do not provide accommodations that are not authorized by the Office of Disability Support Services.

### A Note about Syllabus Statements

**Syllabus Statement** – Putting a statement on your syllabus communicates that you are accommodating, encourages interaction to discuss accommodations, and refers students to Disability Support Services for resources.

“STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Rhode Island School of Design is committed to providing equal opportunity for all students. If you are a student with a disability that may require accommodations to complete the requirements of this course, I encourage you to discuss your learning needs with me during the first week of the term. Once an approval letter from the Office of Disability Support Services is submitted, accommodations will be provided as needed. For more information on how to receive accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services at 401 709-8460 or [disabilitysupportservices@risd.edu](mailto:disabilitysupportservices@risd.edu).”

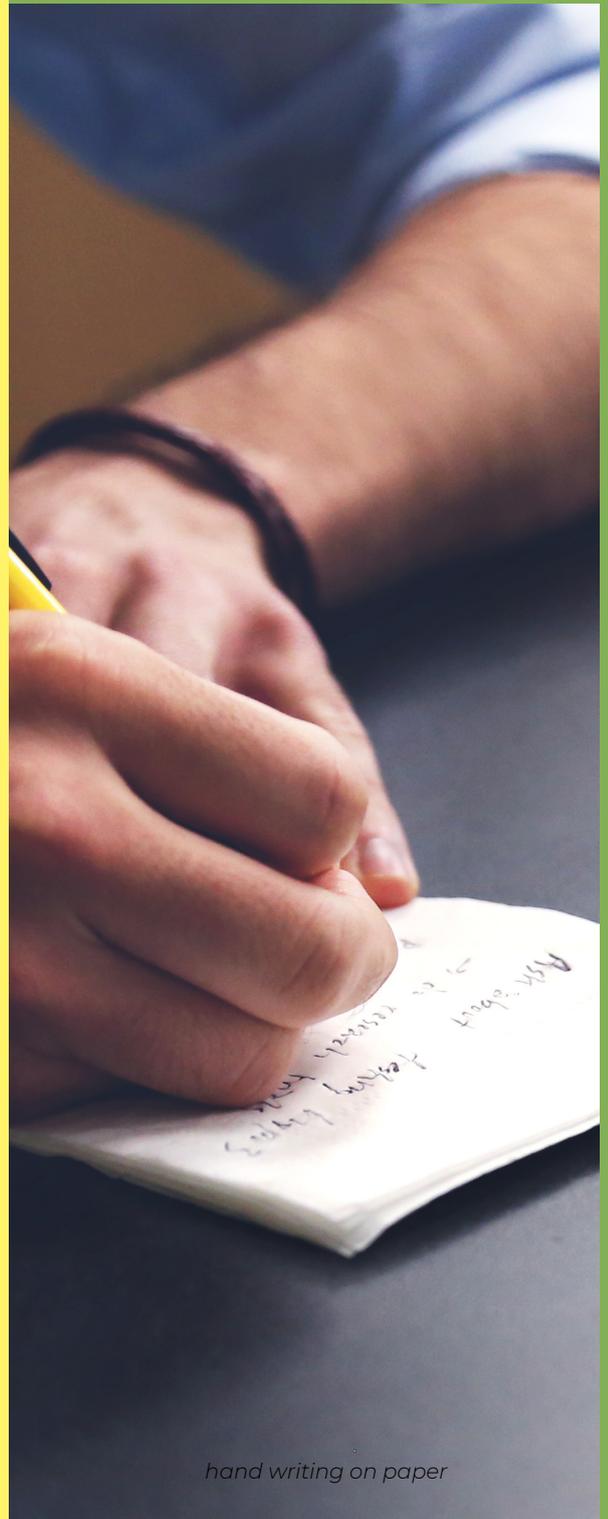
# Medical Reduced Course Load for Students

Students may choose to request a medical reduced course load for many reasons (ex. to make more schedule space to attend medical appointments). A medical reduced course load helps students to minimize stressors and maximize self care. In order to request a medical reduced course load, students should first reach out to [disabilitysupportservices@risd.edu](mailto:disabilitysupportservices@risd.edu)

In the process of pursuing a medical reduced course load, students are required to meet with their advisor and department head to talk about course planning/staying on track with credits. International students must first meet with OISS as a first step when requesting a medical reduced course load as OISS has separate documentation requirements.

## Did you know?

Our office partners with the Office of Health Services and Counseling and Psychological Services.



*hand writing on paper*

---

# KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SERVICE ANIMALS AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

---

A Guide to Animals on Campus

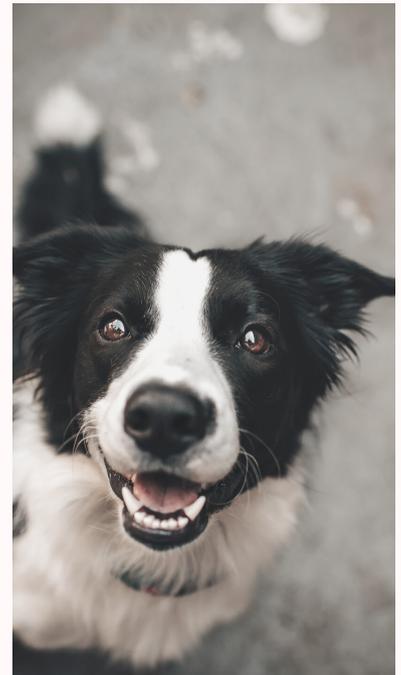
---

## SERVICE ANIMALS

### THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) PERMITS TWO QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF INDIVIDUALS WITH A SERVICE ANIMAL:

- Is this service animal required because of a disability?
- What work or tasks has the animal been trained to perform?

**A service animal** is defined as any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. Some service animals are vested, but it is important to note that this is not always the case as the vest may impede the animals ability to perform a task.



# EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS



*tabby cat sleeping*

## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

Emotional support animals are not considered service animals and are not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, but are covered under the Fair Housing Act. ESA's are only allowed in a student's residential space and outdoor areas. All other campus areas are not approved for emotional support animals.

# Difference Between Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals in Chart Form

<p><b>Service Animal</b></p> 	<p><b>Emotional Support Animal</b></p> 
<p>Required because of a disability and recognized under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act).</p>	<p>Covered under the Fair Housing Act, students can make a request for these animals for emotional support.</p>
<p>Trained to perform work or a task.</p>	<p>Not trained to perform a task.</p>
<p>Allowed in academic buildings.</p>	<p>Not allowed in academic buildings.</p> <p>Students must follow the medical housing accommodations process found on the RISD Housing Portal in order to request an ESA. Students must then receive approval to have an ESA in their residential space.</p>

---

# RESOURCES

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR  
MORE INFORMATION

---



## Contact Us!

### Nicole Verardo

Director of Disability Support Services &  
Academic Support  
nverardo@risd.edu  
401-709-8465

### Brooke Huynh

Academic Disability Specialist  
bhuynh@risd.edu  
401-709-8465

### General email:

disabilitysupportservices@risd.edu

## A Faculty Guide to Student Safety & Well being

[https://cdn.risd.systems/webhook-uploads/1600283155841\\_A-Faculty-and-Staff-Guide-to-Safety-+-Wellbeing.pdf](https://cdn.risd.systems/webhook-uploads/1600283155841_A-Faculty-and-Staff-Guide-to-Safety-+-Wellbeing.pdf)

